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Social Performance and Reticence: Mental Negotiations in Austen, Brontë, and Eliot

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at
Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Abstract

SOCIAL PERFORMANCE AND RETICENCE: MENTAL NEGOTIATIONS IN AUSTEN, BRONTË, AND ELIOT

By Meredith Leigh Spencer, M.A.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at
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This thesis examines how three nineteenth-century British novels purvey and critique contemporary standards regarding social performance and reticence and the strains such standards place on those whose dispositions disincline them to conform to the regulations for decorum articulated in conduct books of the time. Utilizing the psychological lens of introversion and extroversion alongside the cognitive narrative theories of Alan Palmer and Lisa Zunshine, this thesis investigates the construction of individual character identities through the reading of interactions among multiple fictional minds in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* (1853), Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), and George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860).

Introduction

Men and women during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries faced blatantly contradictory expectations with regard to public presentation and engagement, often having to negotiate under which situations to project sociability or exercise restraint. Conduct books published during this era put forth detailed instructions for how men and women were expected to behave in public. Women in particular met strict regulations regarding decorum. In *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* (1774), John Gregory purports that women should be “silent in company, especially in a large one,” and have “an easy dignity in [their] behaviour at public places, but not that confident ease, that unabashed countenance, which seems to set the company at defiance” (28). Gregory also declares, “One of the chief beauties in a female character, is that modest reserve, that retiring delicacy, which avoids the public eye” (26). Yet he contradicts himself: “I wish you”—women—“to have great ease and openness in your conversation” (37). How can a woman converse easily and openly *and* be “silent in company”? Gregory’s abhorrence of “Wit...the most dangerous talent you can possess,” further quells the female’s ability to participate actively in social exchanges, especially with men, around whom she must “be guarded with great discretion and good nature” (30). The demands of conduct books such as Gregory’s oppose concurrent pressures on women to be “accomplished,” an appellation that denotes exhibiting the performative skills of music, dance, and elocution. That nineteenth-century standards pressured women to be both discreet in public and talented in performance arts demonstrates the impracticality of society’s expectations for women to be everything at once. A woman was not allowed to be *just* quiet; she must be quiet *and* sociable *and* willing to perform.

She was required to mold her personality to suit the expectations of her social context—whether to make herself affable or to minimize her presence—so as to avoid being socially branded as cold and standoffish or, worse, a flirt.

On the other hand, conduct books written for men present unique instructions that plainly favor assertive sociability over reserved detachment, as is evidenced in *Lord Chesterfield's Advice to His Son, On Men and Manners* (1775). In this manual, Lord Chesterfield devotes several pages to denouncing bashfulness: he claims, “we [men] make ourselves contemptible, if we cannot come into a room and speak to people without being out of countenance, or without embarrassment. A man who is really diffident, timid, and bashful, be his merit what it will, never can push himself in the world; his despondency throws him into inaction, and the forward, the bustling, and the petulant will always precede him” (9). Furthermore, Chesterfield implies that the man who makes himself approachable will surpass the man who doesn't in both “business [and] pleasure” (3). Lord Chesterfield does acknowledge the risk of being *too* sociable, but he undoubtedly prefers for a man to be forward and outgoing rather than aloof. The inconsistencies in nineteenth-century society's standards for decorum in both men and women placed strains on individuals' abilities to read each other's minds; ambiguities in the “rules” obfuscated when one was being genuine versus erecting a façade or succumbing to external pressures. The patterns of these expectations and the communicative errors that result from failing to fit in to those patterns constitute a frequent theme in nineteenth-century novels. I am particularly concerned in this investigation with novels by Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, and George Eliot. Astutely attentive to internal psychological operations and social interactions among men and women, these three women authors ably crafted narratives that depict and critique their own society's highly gendered standards regarding social performance and reticence.

The expected *behaviors* regarding sociability and restraint put forth in nineteenth-century conduct books parallel the inherent *personality traits* of extroversion and introversion. Dispositions inevitably influence behaviors and actions, and when dispositions conflict with class- and gender-based standards for behavior, misunderstandings occur. Introverts, for instance, typically resist the behavior of socializing, while extroverts struggle with social restraint. Both conflicts of interest place unique pressures on introverts and extroverts to present public façades that disagree with their natural temperaments. It is when individuals fail to conform to set expectations that their behaviors are misunderstood as representing a personality that is untrue to their genuine natures. The introvert who refrains from social engagement may be unfairly judged as aloof or standoffish, and the extrovert whose expressive inclinations turn projecting bashfulness into a chore may be judged as gregarious and pleasure-seeking. Not until readers and fellow characters grow sufficiently acquainted with a character are they able to judge when that character's behaviors accurately reflect his or her disposition. As such, it is critical for readers to be alert for when characters may be misreading each other as well as to be willing to revise their own (potentially mis-) understandings of characters.

Carl Jung standardized the use of the terms “extraversion” and “introversion” in his 1921 work, *Psychological Types* (published in English in 1923), after which Katharine Briggs and Isabel Briggs Meyers popularized the typology in developing the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (first published in 1962). However, the terms and concepts date back to the seventeenth century. The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites Thomas Blount's *Glossographia; or, A dictionary interpreting all such hard words, whether Hebrew, Greek or Latin...as are now used in our refined English tongue*, published in 1656, as the first occurrence of the term “extroversion,”

which it defined as “scattering or distracting one’s thoughts upon exterior objects.”¹ The first occurrence of “introversion” arose in Thomas Gataker’s *A discours apologetical* in 1654 with a religious connotation associated with fasting and praying.² Introversion is here defined as the “action of turning the thoughts inward, i.e. to one’s own mind or soul, or to the contemplation of inward or spiritual things” (*OED*).³ This brief study of early recorded uses of the terminology demonstrates that the binary of seeking stimulation or turning one’s thoughts internally versus externally was articulated long before the nineteenth century, laying the foundation for Jung’s work in the field of human psychology. Jung’s *Psychological Types* offers an in-depth explication of how these centuries-old terms can be applied to individual human personality types and provides a contextual springboard from which the literary critic can explore *character* personality types. Jung’s typology, though it postdates the nineteenth-century novels in question, provides a thoroughly informative paratextual backdrop and offers a parallel modern vocabulary for exploring the period-specific dichotomy of social performance and reticence.

Cognitive narrative theory and its methodologies help readers negotiate the distinction between the earlier emphasis on behaviors and the contemporary focus on inclinations by enabling them to piece together a character’s physical and mental actions to construct notions of his or her identity. Applications of cognitive narrative theory illuminate how nineteenth-century novelists convey their understandings of different human temperaments and how those temperaments influence social interactions in a stringently regimented society. I chiefly engage with the work of Alan Palmer and Lisa Zunshine in my efforts to analyze individual character

¹ The first occurrence of “extraversion,” an alternate spelling of the term, is found in Robert Boyle’s *Exper. Particular Qual.* in 1675, though this spelling is now considered obsolete and rare (*OED*).

² No entries were found for an alternate spelling of “introversion.”

³ The use of “extrovert” and “introvert” as verbs also dates to the mid-seventeenth century (1671 and 1669, respectively), though the use of these terms as nouns does not regularize until the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries (1918 and 1883, respectively; *OED*). The first occurrence of the alternate spelling of “extravert” (*obs.*) used as a verb dates 1669 (*OED*). There is no alternate spelling for “introvert” as a verb, and neither term has an alternate spelling for its noun form.

personalities and the mental interactions that occur amongst multiple minds. Specifically, in *Social Minds in the Novel* (2010), Palmer develops the binary of *internalist* and *externalist* perspectives to differentiate between the mental perspective that “stresses those aspects that are inner, introspective, private, solitary, individual” and the perspective that “stresses those aspects that are outer, active, public, social,” respectively (39).⁴ Palmer explains that the internalist’s mind is psychologically mysterious, detached from social interaction, and passive, therefore requiring “highly verbalized thought” as a means of communication (39). On the other hand, the externalist’s mind is “behavioral, evident, embodied, and engaged,” accessible through outward observations and non-verbal communication (39). Novelists use a variety of narrative strategies like dialogue, descriptions of action and body language, omniscient descriptions of thought, and first-person narrator reflections to represent and convey these mental perspectives. The introvert predominantly operates through an internalist perspective, directing thought and energy inwards in a way that limits his or her psychological and emotional visibility, while the extrovert’s mind is more externally available as a result of directing mental and physical energy outward and thus being more “readable” through body language and other unspoken cues. This distinction between private and public mentalities lays the groundwork for a theoretical examination of the introversion – extroversion dichotomy in nineteenth-century fictions.

Palmer suggests that traditional cognitive narratology has heretofore placed a heavier emphasis on the internalist perspective than the externalist perspective and aims to rectify this imbalance through his central and, within the field of cognitive narratology, controversial thesis that “much of our thought is *visible*” (4). Palmer uses the term *social minds* to describe “those aspects of the whole mind that are revealed through the externalist perspective,” aspects that are

⁴ See Palmer’s introduction to *Fictional Minds* (2004) for a description of Colwyn Trevarthen’s work on the *subjective first* and the *intersubjective first*, topics that inspired the development of his internalist and externalist dichotomy (5).

physically embodied and readily available for interpretation (39). A related method of discussing mental interpretation is through the concepts of *mindreading* and *theory of mind*, which Zunshine defines as “our evolved cognitive adaptation for explaining people’s behavior in terms of their mental states, such as thoughts, desires, feelings, and intentions” (“Cognitive Alternatives to Interiority” 147). Examining how different minds communicate nonverbally as well as verbally enables the construction of a nuanced interpretation of a character’s psychological identity. Furthermore, recognizing how “a fictional character [is] aware of her reflection in the minds of others” as well as in her own mind constitutes “one strategy for making [readers] perceive her as having interiority” or internal self-awareness, the key to understanding characters’ self-identities (160). The necessity of combining a character’s self-representation with perceptions held by fellow characters implies that the internalist and externalist perspectives are ultimately inseparable and codependent; Zunshine writes, “[f]ictional interiority is...a social phenomenon” (161). Social cognition cannot occur without a collection of individual cognitive entities. As such, an investigation of introverted and extroverted minds calls for thorough consideration of how the independent mind interacts with other minds. Herein lies the core of my exploration of how different psychological dispositions determine a character’s relative “readability” and the consequences of not molding one’s dispositions to the nineteenth-century social context.

I have chosen to explore these cognitive phenomena through close readings of the characters of Lucy Snowe in Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette* (1853) and Mr. Darcy and Jane Bennett in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). I have also sketched what a similar investigation would look like of Philip Wakem from George Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss* (1860). Modern scholarship abounds with critical analyses of these characters, but none has applied the psychological dichotomy of introversion and extroversion to their fictional personalities.

Scholars such as Nancy Armstrong, Michael Curtin, Mary Poovey, Elizabeth Langland, and Maggie Lane have done edifying work on the state and social consequences of nineteenth-century British standards for social conduct and reticence as they are represented in the time period's novels, but the relationship between character dispositions and characters' abilities to operate according to these standards has not yet been investigated. However, Patricia Meyer Spacks, in her introduction to *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), foregrounds this discussion through her insightful study of the qualities of "sense" and "sensitivity" as the terms were understood in Austen's nineteenth-century context. "Sense" retains its nineteenth-century connotation today, but "sensitivity" in Austen's time "referred to a then current version of emotional extravagance," the show of which "many thought, could too readily replace enacted compassion or social responsibility—proclaimed feeling substituting for action" (1-2). Spacks then elucidates how Austen introduces the novel's two sisters as apparent "psychological opposites," Marianne "celebrat[ing] the life of emotional intensity" and driven by sensitivity while Elinor "anchors [Marianne's] volatility" with her "common sense" (6). Marianne "conceals nothing, whereas her sister reveals nothing" (9). Spacks observes that this contrast calls attention to "the difference between expressiveness and restraint," a near identical binary to that of social performance and reticence (9). Although this thesis does not specifically address *Sense and Sensibility*, I suspect that a study of introversion and extroversion alongside nineteenth-century understandings of sense and sensitivity in Marianne and Elinor would prove immensely fruitful.

Another salient aspect of Spacks' introduction is the stress she places on finding *balance* between the unique elements of sense and sensitivity. She says,

As a tale of two sisters with contrasting modes of confronting the world...*Sense and Sensibility*...reveals the insufficiencies both of sense and of sensitivity in

isolation from each other. The capacity to know and to accept one's own feelings, and to express them judiciously, can be a source of sustenance. Social demands must not be allowed to drown out personal ones. The reverse, however, also holds true: personal demands cannot obviate social ones, and judicious expression of feeling forbids extravagant outpourings. (31)

This necessity for judiciousness in expressing and containing one's emotions also rings true for social performance and reticence. The contradictory instructions in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conduct books perhaps unintentionally point to a need for equilibrium between outward demonstration and inward reservation. One must avoid being too much of one thing and should negotiate which social contexts call for which behaviors and the presentation of which personality traits. Such expectations result in frequent performances of falsity as men and women routinely adjust their public personas irrespective of their private dispositions.

The first chapter of this thesis explores *Villette*'s Lucy Snowe, a character who uses her authority as a first-person narrator to construct for her readers an image of a profoundly introverted woman in order to conceal a more genuinely passionate and extroverted nature. I argue that Lucy projects a personality that relies entirely on sense to disguise her dispositional preferences for dramatization, emotional expressivity ("sensibility"), and external or social stimulation. I then argue that Lucy's performance of introversion functions both as a personal defense mechanism for her intense fears of intimacy and loss and as a method of conforming to nineteenth-century British standards of decorum. The second chapter of this thesis investigates two introverted characters whose inward-inclining dispositions render them challenging to read and whose failures to comply with gendered standards for social engagement challenge their abilities to function normatively in their social environments: *Pride and Prejudice*'s Mr. Darcy

holds an aversion for social interaction that makes him appear proud and unlikeable to those who do not know him, while Jane Bennett's reservation of feeling, in compliance with the expectations of her time, results in other characters' critical misunderstanding of her emotional desires. That the misreadings of both of these characters on the basis of their introverted natures are ultimately rectified suggests in Austen a sympathy for those who are misunderstood for reasons beyond their control and a potential critique of her society's unjust expectations for men and women to be simultaneously outgoing and reserved.

Finally, the coda projects an opportunity for a unique investigation of how introverted and extroverted characters function in nineteenth-century novels. While Lucy Snowe, Mr. Darcy, and Jane Bennett all possess the ability to manipulate their public personas, Philip Wakem of George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* is, I suggest, resigned to a life of introversion by his physical disability and the effect his disfigurement has on how others perceive him. Philip's physical limitations render him unable to participate in conventional male activities, and his humpback repulses others. These factors result in his social isolation, forcing him to seek happiness internally rather than externally. A regrettably under-studied character, Philip Wakem offers scholars much to examine as a liminal figure in the binaristic introversion – extroversion distinction. Together, Brontë's *Villette*, Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, and Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* offer just a few of the many nineteenth-century British characters who are ripe for exploration through the psychological and behavioral lenses described above. I hope the insights presented here open further discussion of the role of the novel genre in purveying or critiquing nineteenth-century expectations regarding introversion and extroversion.

Chapter One

“A Personage in Disguise”: The Performance of Introversion in Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette*

Seldom is a nineteenth-century British protagonist equipped with as little personal history as is Lucy Snowe of Charlotte Brontë’s 1853 novel, *Villette*. All readers learn about Lucy’s existence prior to the first event of the narrative’s plot is that as “a girl” she visited Bretton “about twice a year” (7). Then, all readers are told about the events leading up to the beginning of her narrative is that Lucy’s godmother sensed eminent events “whose very shadow” Lucy could not anticipate and as a result came “in person to claim [Lucy] of the kinsfolk with whom was at that time fixed [her] permanent residence” (7-8). Disclosing no details, Lucy experienced an “unsettled sadness,” suggesting to readers the occurrence of a family tragedy even she does not fully understand and reflecting her resultant “unsettled” status in the Bretton household. Lucy’s reflections from this time, though favorable about her visits to Bretton, focus on the house’s “quiet...atmosphere” and “clean...pavement,” revealing Lucy’s serene and remarkably adult-like temperament during her childhood (7). Only the superficial reader, however, would not feel a bit uneasy about the absence of emotional reaction to such displacement, even if Lucy’s origins are never explained. The striking contrast between her reticence about her origins and the abundance of emotional reflection later in the novel points to a conflict within the dichotomy between introversion and extroversion; Lucy exploits her narrational authority to craft the image of an introverted woman that disguises a more authentic extroverted and social nature. She decides as narrator to conceal her background and construct a self-identity that enables her

to cope with emotional hardship and present a façade to her readers that aligns with class-based standards of propriety and reservation.

The contradictions between the character Lucy *is* and the character Lucy presents to her readers and fellow characters are often a result of Lucy's staunch efforts to control or suppress her passions with clear reasoning. Lucy takes pains to explain and rationalize to her readers (and sometimes herself) that she is reserved, "lik[ing] peace so well, and s[eeing] stimulus so little, that when the latter came [she] almost felt it a disturbance" (8). Later, Lucy contrasts Polly's experience of "endured agony" at her father's leaving and the tender responses of Mrs. Bretton and Graham to Polly's grief with her claim, "I, Lucy Snowe, was calm" (25). She insists on being viewed as rational and controlled, not prone to emotional outbursts or violent passions. However, I argue that the fact that Lucy must *explain* to her readers that she is an introvert indicates that she is in fact constructing a façade to conceal a more extroverted, outward-pleasure-seeking disposition than she finds acceptable for reasons of personal self-protection and social adaptability. Multiple perusals of the novel provide further evidence of Lucy's extroversion in her actions and interactions with others despite her attempts to paint herself as an introvert. Though Lucy does not explicate her motivations for this pattern of self-representation, I suggest that these efforts serve both as a coping mechanism for her utter aloneness and as a veneer behind which she can operate discreetly in Victorian society.

Another useful way to examine this division in Lucy's identity between her introverted rationale of extroverted tendencies is to examine differences in critics' perceptions of Lucy as a character vs. perceptions of Lucy as a narrator. In twentieth and twenty-first-century scholarship, Lucy's character is repeatedly described as "reticen[t]," "passive," "calm and reasonable," "stern," "prudish," and other terms synonymous with being quiet and reserved (Lawrence 452,

Colby 414, Rabinowitz 249, Peel 233, Kent 335). Rachel Brownstein goes so far as to call her “faceless”; Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar characterize her as “a woman *without*—outside society, without parents or friends, without physical or mental attractions, without money or confidence or health,” someone who is “[s]ilent, invisible,...frigid, spiritless” (Brownstein 162, Gilbert and Gubar 400). Such attributions typify readers’ initial understandings of Lucy’s character as that of a soft-spoken though independent woman whose debilitating interiority isolates her from her surroundings, willingly and/or circumstantially. However, a look at descriptions of Lucy’s narrational style—as opposed to her character or disposition—reveals a class of adjectives of a rather different nature: as a narrator, Lucy is labeled “problematic,” “mislead[ing]...evasi[ve],” even “rebarbative” (Cooper xxxii, Gilbert and Gubar 418-9, Green 223). Though often (not always) bearing a negative connotation, these descriptors paint Lucy the narrator as more active than Lucy the character, a supposedly passive observer and sufferer. Herein lies the challenge of negotiating Lucy’s nature: readers must parse these conflicting notions of Lucy’s identity as the protagonist of her own first-person narrative to construct a cohesive view of her fictional mind.

An application of James Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz’s rhetorical approach to narrative theory helps readers decipher their understandings of Lucy as a character from those of Lucy as a narrator. Phelan and Rabinowitz differentiate between “dimensions and functions of character—that is,...the attributes that serve as the building blocks of character and the coalescence of those attributes into a larger entity” (113-4). The building blocks of Lucy’s character are those bits of information she shares about herself (predominantly consisting of introverted qualities), but the function of her character coalesces into a markedly more extroverted psychology once readers have pieced together the various components of her narration. Phelan and Rabinowitz

acknowledge that a character's dimensions and functions may not always work in tandem; in such cases, I suggest that thorough character analysis requires simultaneous consideration of what dimensions are *narrated* alongside how those dimensions *function* in the narration. Therefore, readers must look beyond their cursory perceptions of Lucy's character as an introvert, which are based primarily on *what* Lucy tells, and instead direct their attention to her rhetoric, that is, *how* she tells. In so comparing Lucy's observational reports with her rhetorical maneuvers and her actions themselves (invoking the classic showing vs. telling dichotomy), readers will be better equipped to weigh her representations of plot against her retrospective psychological reflections to assemble and evaluate her covertly extroverted identity.

An understanding of the paradox of self-knowledge, the patent inability of one individual to represent him or herself sufficiently to an audience, contributes to understanding how readers engage with the text of *Villette* to parse a coherent understanding of Lucy's mind. Carl Jung says, "[j]udgment in relation to one's own personality is indeed always extraordinarily crowded," as one is constantly engaged in an "effort to maintain psychic equilibrium" (10). Put simply, Jung calls into question just how well one can know one's self. Within a fictional context, a literary critic must then ask how well a first-person narrator can represent his or her own story. Pairing this inquiry with the issues of disclosure that become apparent throughout the novel naturally excites discussion of Lucy's unreliability; while this is a dialogue worth having, for the purposes of this endeavor, I feel that entering into such a dialogue would distract from the more central argument of this paper.¹ Instead, I am interested in deconstructing and reconstructing Lucy's identity through analysis of not only her self-descriptions, which readers cannot fully trust, but also her representations of how others perceive and interact with her. Alan Palmer's concepts of situated identity, aspectuality, and continuing-consciousness frames will facilitate this effort. By

¹ For discussions of unreliability in *Villette*, see Mary Jacobus (1979) and Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz (1985).

analyzing relationships with characters like Ginevra, Lucy's colleagues, Dr. John, and M. Paul, readers will see that although most characters read Lucy at her fabricated face value, the one closest to her at the end of the novel sees a different woman, the woman I believe is the "real" Lucy. In order to demonstrate how Lucy's determination to hide her true nature situates her readers under a false pretense of introversion, I will closely examine her narrated self-descriptions in contrast to her observations of how others perceive her nature and her actions.

Insofar as readers wish to pin down Lucy's "authentic" identity, Palmer's concept of *situated identity* becomes immensely valuable. The notion of a situated identity balances in readers' minds the differences between Lucy's self-descriptions with her descriptions of how others perceive her in creating a rounded understanding of her personality. In *Fictional Minds* (2004), Palmer echoes the earlier-mentioned notion of the paradox of self-knowledge, asking, "If you want to find out about an aspect of someone's mind, say whether or not they are selfish, who do you ask? Certainly not just them, because you know that you cannot be sure that you will get a complete answer. Selfish people are not likely to admit to being selfish" (168). Similarly, Lucy is not likely to admit to having extroverted tendencies that might classify her alongside the likes of Mrs. Home or Miss Fanshawe. Therefore, readers must look into the perceptions of other characters in order to "situate" Lucy's identity within a more reliable social context.² This situating process occurs through what Palmer terms the *continuing-consciousness frame*, "the ability to take a reference to a character in the text and attach to it a presumed consciousness that exists continuously within the storyworld" (*Social Minds* 10). In other words, the reader compiles and integrates every mental moment or plot action that refers to a specific character to

² It would be negligent not to note that given the novel's first-person narration, Lucy's understanding of how others perceive her is limited; readers are only given *Lucy's representations of others' perceptions of her*, which jeopardizes the level of reliability that might be achieved through a third-person omniscient narrator. However, I venture to argue that many of Lucy's observations of other characters' perceptions double as some of her most frank self-assessments and consequently enable more than limit readers' constructions of her identity.

generate a coherent understanding of that character's fictional mind; what results is a *cognitive narrative* (*Social Minds* 12). Palmer's continuing-consciousness frame enables readers to formulate Lucy's cognitive narrative within the context of introversion and extroversion.

Lucy's construction of an introverted disguise originated from necessity. Her placement in Bretton, a house that would never become her home, played a crucial role in the development of her need to construct an introverted persona by forcing her at a young age to learn to exist on her own, both physically and psychologically. Karen Lawrence astutely points out how the first event of the novel's plot draws attention to Lucy's homelessness. Lawrence says, it is "self-consciously that the plot begins with an intruding *letter*... Lucy thinks the letter might be 'from home'... but instead... Lucy receives a letter from 'Home,' that is Mr. Home, announcing the arrival of Polly, 'a second guest'... reminding us that Lucy is the first" (459). Lucy is then further removed from her place as "[o]ne child in a household of grown people" upon Polly's arrival (Brontë 7). The added competition of a younger girl whose active emotional needs outweigh Lucy's passive existence further diminishes Lucy's status in relation to both the physical space she occupies (she must now share her room) and the social role she plays in the household (Polly is preferred by both Mrs. Bretton and, of course, Graham). Despite such diminution, Lucy finds in Polly an outlet for the emotions she herself suppresses. Multiple scholars have pointed to Polly as something of an alter ego for Lucy (see Gilbert and Gubar, for instance), an argument to which I would add that Polly becomes a figure through which Lucy, who insists upon being in control of herself at all times, can express passions that she refuses to accept within herself. For instance, Lucy observes Polly's profound anguish upon temporarily losing her father and yet sheds not a tear of her own in response to the loss of her family and home. Lucy's fascination with Polly's weeping and other coping techniques not only demonstrates voyeuristic tendencies

but also hints at an emotional gap in Lucy's personality in that she is either unable to react as Polly does or actively chooses not to.

Lucy's repression of openly expressive reactions to tragic events points to an intense fear of experiencing emotional hurt, offering yet another reason for reverting inwards to hide behind her introverted façade. Evidence of this fear emerges during Lucy's time caring for Miss Marchmont early in the novel. Specifically, when the crippled woman is approaching death and Lucy realizes she may have to leave the comfort and regularity of Miss Marchmont's company, she says, "I had wanted to compromise with Fate: to escape occasional great agonies by submitting to a whole life of privation and small pains. Fate would not so be pacified; nor would Providence sanction this shrinking sloth and cowardly indolence" (42). Lucy openly admits to dreading "great agonies," presumably those that result from incurring the risk of vulnerability inherent in the experience of emotional intimacy, but she scolds herself as a coward for seeking the security from pain that can only be achieved through solitude. That working for Miss Marchmont limits Lucy's access to the social world creates in Miss Marchmont's home a safe haven in which Lucy adapts to the restrictions of her new occupation by embracing introverted behaviors such as taking pleasure in solitary pastimes and seeking happiness internally rather than materially. So doing provides Lucy with a reliable mechanism for coping with her isolation and masking her fear of social vulnerability.

Despite the comfort Lucy claims to find in solitude, readers occasionally find that she has to convince herself that being alone is acceptable, both for herself and society. In these moments, Lucy rationalizes herself out of her discomfort with seclusion, exposing an intrinsic though suppressed yearning for company. First, while traveling to France, Lucy finds herself alone on the boat's deck for hours, which she passed in a "tranquil, and even happy mood" before

remembering her “hazardous – some would have said hopeless – character” (62). She says, quoting Richard Lovelace, “I feel that, as—Stone walls do not a prison make, / Nor iron bars—a cage, so peril, loneliness, an uncertain future, are not oppressive evils, so long as the frame is healthy and the faculties are employed” (62). Just as fear of loneliness begins to set in, Lucy consciously reasons with herself that she is not imprisoned by her solitude. I suggest that the true introvert would not articulate such a thought and instead would welcome the privacy. Later, at the Rue Fossette, Lucy rationalizes her seclusion a second time: “The whole day did I wander or sit...alone, finding...a sort of companionship in my own thoughts. I well remember that I exchanged but two sentences that day with any living being: not that I felt solitary; I was glad to be quiet” (143). “Not that I felt solitary,” she says. Lucy again interrupts her narration with a statement that renders her external situation emotionally acceptable by recasting loneliness and isolation as peaceful quiet. In fact, she purports to hardly be alone, as her own thoughts provide her with “a sort of companionship.” Lucy’s defensiveness prepares readers for the upcoming summer she spends alone at the school during which she sinks into a relentless depression; then, her rationale no longer suffices to help her cope with the intensity of her seclusion.

Later in the novel, when Lucy finds herself returned to Mrs. Bretton’s caring hands following a mental breakdown occasioned by actual isolation, Lucy expresses most eloquently her deep need for and simultaneous fear of friendship. She says,

I felt that I still had friends. Friends, not professing vehement attachment, not offering the tender solace of well-matched and congenial relationship; on whom, therefore, but moderate demand of affection was to be made, of whom but moderate expectation formed; but towards whom my heart softened instinctively,

and yearned with an importunate gratitude, which I entreated Reason betimes to check.

“Do not let me think of them too often, too much, too fondly,” I implored: “let me be content with a temperate draught of this living stream: let me not run athirst, and apply passionately to its welcome waters: let me not imagine in them a sweeter taste than earth’s fountains know. Oh! would to God I may be enabled to feel enough sustained by an occasional, amicable intercourse, rare, brief, unengrossing and tranquil: quite tranquil!”

Still repeating this word, I turned to my pillow; and *still* repeating it, I steeped that pillow with tears. (199)

This passage speaks volumes for Lucy’s character. In a poignantly honest voice, she expresses her gratitude for the society of a few individuals who value her as a person worthy of care and affection; yet, in her mind, Lucy stifles this friendship. Rather than embracing Mrs. Bretton and Graham as companions, she prays to God not to “let [her] think of them too often, too much, too fondly,” in order that she will not lose herself in her emotions and crave undeserved attention. She then prays that God will keep her from “run[ning] athirst” and will permit acquaintanceship to suffice in “sustain[ing]” and nourishing her spirit. She finally prays for the power to maintain her independence so as to never open herself up to the pain of loss. Herein lies one of Lucy’s primary motivators for building her façade of introversion as a coping mechanism for the self. The loss Lucy experienced in her childhood likely occasioned more pain than she has shared with readers, and her suppression manifests itself in her adulthood fear of closeness.

A secondary reason for erecting her wall of introversion is that Lucy holds strong views against opposite, extroverted behaviors in other women. Whether out of envy or genuine distaste,

Lucy on multiple occasions expresses a prejudice against women who present frivolous, flirtatious, or excessively social manners. On the third page of the book, she ascribes Mrs. Home, Polly's now-deceased mother, the personality of a "very pretty, but a giddy, careless woman;" Lucy hears that Mrs. Home died from "over-exert[ing] herself at a ball;" and even Mrs. Bretton expresses her wish that Polly will not turn out like her "mamma; as silly and frivolous a little flirt as ever sensible man was weak enough to marry" (9). Mrs. Home is called a "butterfly woman," a butterfly being, according to the *OED*, a "vain, gaudily attired...light-headed, inconstant person" (9). The utter lack of respect in these descriptions of Mrs. Home illustrates Lucy's condescension and distrust of women with extroverted proclivities. Additionally, moments in Lucy's relationship with Ginevra expose resentment of girls "of Ginevra Fanshawe's light, careless temperament" for their "vapid[ity]," and "vain coquett[ishness]" (63, 94, 96). In some cases, her bias against this particular stereotype of extroverts (female coquettes) appears socially engrained in her by English standards as they contrast culturally with the French-speaking town of Villette: Lucy scorns the Parisienne teacher at school, as she "mortally hated work, and loved what she called pleasure; being an insipid, heartless, brainless dissipation of time" (140). By casting herself opposite these vain, frivolous women, Lucy enhances her own image as a serious, reserved woman. The elitism imbued in her characterizations compensates for the existence of her own related qualities and desires for social activity.

One consequence of Lucy's cold, distancing façade is that it prevents most characters from attempting to dig deeper than her superficial presentation. She successfully convinces most of her fellow characters to perceive her as the introverted individual she has constructed, though different characters interpret her reticence uniquely. Lucy admits, "What contradictory attributes of character we sometimes find ascribed to us, according to the eye with which we are viewed!"

(334). As a result, when piecing together Lucy's cognitive narrative, readers must consider each perceiver's *aspect*, or the perspective from which they view Lucy. This concept of *aspectuality*, the idea that "storyworlds are always experienced under some aspects and not others by the characters who inhabit them," is a kind of reader-response theory for interpreting individual characters rather than entire texts (*Social Minds* 40). Therefore, because readers cannot fully trust Lucy's first-person account of herself, they must consider each character's evaluation of her (as represented through Lucy's narration) within the context of the nature of that character's relationship with Lucy and the environment in which the relationship occurs. So doing will take into account any biases fellow characters may hold against the individual in question.

One demonstrative example of a character with a limited aspect with regard to Lucy is Ginevra Fanshawe, who is painfully (for the reader, not Lucy) honest about her perception of *Villette*'s protagonist. During Madame Beck's *fête*, Ginevra tells Lucy that she "would not be you for a kingdom," in response to which Lucy is nonplussed; she rarely takes Ginevra seriously (160). Ginevra compares them further, "see how happy am I, and how miserable are you":

I am the daughter of a gentleman of family, and though my father is not rich, I have expectations from an uncle. Then, I am just eighteen, the finest age possible. I have had a continental education, and though I can't spell, I have abundant accomplishments. I am pretty; *you* can't deny that; I may have as many admirers as I choose. This very night I have been breaking the hearts of two gentlemen,...There is *me*—happy ME; now for *you*, poor soul!

I suppose you are nobody's daughter, since you took care of little children when you first came to Villette: you have no relations; you can't call yourself young at twenty-three; you have no attractive accomplishments—no beauty. As to

admirers, you hardly know what they are;....I believe you never were in love, and never will be: you don't know the feeling, and so much the better, for though you might have your own heart broken, no living heart will you ever break. Isn't it all true? (160)

Lucy denies nothing, even commends Ginevra for her “shrewd[ness]” and honesty (161). Before accepting everything Ginevra says as true, however, readers must take into account her individual aspect: under what circumstances do the two characters interact? Lucy repeatedly shuns Ginevra’s shallow, frivolous conversation, yet Ginevra persists in adopting Lucy as a confidante. The two often spend time together, but always by Ginevra’s initiation and always for the purpose of Lucy listening to Ginevra’s concerns about courtship or how beautiful she is. That Lucy is reluctant to engage in Ginevra’s chosen topics of conversation establishes Ginevra’s perception of Lucy as a woman miserable and forever without love. While Ginevra’s aspect is limited to a specific type of exchange, the above confrontation nevertheless leads readers to consider this element of Lucy’s personality, that of being incapable of loving or being loved. Now that Ginevra has announced the possibility (and Lucy has readily agreed), readers must incorporate the notion into their development of Lucy’s situated identity as a false introvert.

Ginevra Fanshawe is not alone in her perception of Lucy as an unhappy outsider. Lucy’s fellow teachers at the Rue Fossette all see her as bookish, a stereotypical perception of introverts. Lucy says, “Madame Beck herself deemed me a regular *bas-bleu*,” an expression that translates to “bluestocking” and is a term used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries³ to describe scholarly women, arguably a period-specific form of female introversion (261). Lucy continues to explain how Madame Beck “often and solemnly used to warn me not to study too much, lest

³ Gary Kelly confirms, “Bluestocking feminism...had roots in the seventeenth century,...was fully developed among a small group of women and men in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, and...was diffused more widely through the late eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century in England” (163).

‘the blood should all go to my head.’ Indeed, everybody in the Rue Fossette held a superstition that ‘Meess Lucie’ was learned; with the notable exception of M. Emanuel,” whose perception of Lucy I will discuss shortly (261). Nineteenth-century American obstetrician Charles Meigs, in his 1867 work, *Obstetrics, The Science and the Art*, explicates the predominant medical belief (clearly shared by Madame Beck) that young women who studied too much were rendered infertile by a cessation of menstruation as a result of the blood flow being directed to the brain rather than the uterus.⁴ Put coarsely, a woman who read “too much” ceased to be a woman. Thus, Lucy suggests that her colleagues, like Ginevra, desexualize her on the basis of her “bas-bleu” status into an entity incapable of romance, marriage, or motherhood. Their reading of Lucy is based on their aspect of seeing her always in the role of a teacher or as a peer who sits quietly while the other women gossip about their romantic exploits. Despite elements of truth in how the women view her, Lucy steers her readers away from trusting their perceptions both by mocking their French pronunciation of her name and by stating, “[t]hus does the world give us credit for merits we have not” (261). Lucy projects an image of the studious, intellectual introvert but then resents that she is successful in so misdirecting her perceivers, for she does not self-award the “merit” of studiousness. This contradiction suggests that her true affinities lie elsewhere than buried in a book, something she yearns for someone to acknowledge.

⁴ Meigs states, “As to the young girl—a young female who has been brought up at home in the country, is rarely sent to a boarding-school to finish her education without soon finding herself the subject of a catamenial derangement. She may have been perfectly regular at home; but soon after she takes her place upon the school-form and daily devotes many hours to study, the menses are apt to be suspended, and to remain suspended until she leaves the school, and ceases to consume her nerve-force in those mental or intellectual operations, that require for their effectuation all the biotic power she is capable of evolving. The consumption of this force leaves her destitute both of the power and the necessity to discharge the menstrual blood; not depriving her, meanwhile, of the force required to fulfil the true physiological office, the ripening, to wit, and the discharging of her monthly ovulum from the stroma. Her ovulation goes on regularly, and she is well, though not apparently menstruous. I have found many young women thus affected; but...I have not ventured to interfere beyond the interference of recommending a lessened devotion to mental labor, a more abundant and exciting diet, and a proper amount of daily exercise in the free air. Such amenorrhœas cease as soon as the girl leaves school” (155). Helen Cooper similarly explains how “[n]ineteenth-century medical belief had it that if a woman studied or read too much her blood would drain from her womb, where it was needed for reproduction, into her head, leaving her barren” (577n10).

The men in Lucy's life, excepting one, share similar perceptions of her as something of a bookworm, shy and reserved. Lucy perceives how Mr. Home, for instance, esteems her "a model teacher, the essence of the sedate and discreet: somewhat conventional, perhaps, too strict, limited, and scrupulous, but still the pink and pattern of governess-correctness" (334). In other words, one version of a stereotypical introvert. Dr. John views her in similarly dry terms, though he has a very different relationship with Lucy. Contrary to her desires, Dr. John views Lucy as only a friend and patient. That he is unable to be attracted to her in the way she wishes again negates Lucy's viability as a woman. This negation is not entirely out of Lucy's control, however. Knowing him from an early age, Lucy is aware that Graham would not be attracted to her and so constructed her persona into a woman she knew he would not desire romantically, not as a way of preventing his attraction, but with full knowledge that she would not attract him. Addressing herself, Lucy says, "Dr. John Bretton knows you only as 'quiet Lucy'—'a creature inoffensive as a shadow;' he has said, and you have heard him say it: 'Lucy's disadvantages spring from over-gravity in tastes and manner—want of colour in character and costume'" (371). Lucy's façade of introversion fades her into the background as "only" a "shadow," rendering her, in her own self-descriptions and in the eyes of Dr. John, Ginevra, and the women of the school, a mere "looker-on" with an "overcast...nature...a subdued habit" (143, 330-1). This consequence functions as part of her self-protective front, yet none of these relationships give Lucy the emotional fulfillment that comes only from being with someone who is able to see beyond the façade. Lucy's persona, in perhaps *overemphasizing* the desired quality of reticence, thus unintentionally invites the neglect that sinks her into depression.

Gradually, and perhaps unexpectedly, however, M. Paul grows into the single individual who can provide Lucy with the emotional fulfillment she needs to recover from her misery. From

his first entrance into the novel, he has natural insight into Lucy's demeanor that elucidates her extroverted proclivities despite efforts to appear reserved, contemplative, and composed. Upon Lucy's arrival at the Rue Fossette, M. Paul is called upon to read her physiognomy, at which point Lucy observes a "resolute compression of the lips, and a gathering of the brow, [that] seemed to say that he meant to see through me, and that a veil would be no veil for him" (73). This observation first indicates that Lucy *has* a veil and is attempting not to reveal anything objectionable, yet this man will somehow be impervious to it. Second, her remark foreshadows M. Paul's pending status as the one character who will penetrate any mask she dons. In his initial evaluation of Lucy, M. Paul reports to Madame Beck the presence of a combination of good and bad things in her countenance and, after asking a string of questions ("She is a stranger?... She speaks French?... She understands it?"), the "arbiter of [her] destiny" states, "Engage her. If good predominates in that nature, the action will bring its own reward; if evil – eh bien! ma cousine, ce sera toujours une bonne oeuvre," or "well cousin, it will always be a good deed" (74). Upon this first encounter with M. Paul, readers have no instruction for interpreting his vague words; nor does Lucy. The prescience of his appraisal, however, compounded with Lucy's preliminary observation of his keen abilities of penetration, lay the foundation for M. Paul as a source of insight into Lucy's psychology. As the novel progresses, this function becomes even clearer; his increasing intimacy with Lucy lends more and more credence to his perceptions of this woman he eventually intends to be united with.

Lucy on multiple occasions places her accounts of M. Paul's perceptions of herself in direct contrast with her accounts of how others perceive her. These moments accentuate M. Paul's uniqueness in ways that both criticize and flatter him, a contradiction that demonstrates Lucy's simultaneous fear of and desire for closeness. One such scene occurs after M. Paul scolds

her for making the watchguard, not knowing he is its intended recipient. Lucy then scolds herself for her “wicked fondness for worldly vanities,” confessing feeling shame for seeking external, material pleasure, and then addresses herself: “Who would have thought it? You deemed yourself a melancholy sober-sides enough!” (370). She confirms her self-attribution as a sedate, serious “sober-sides” with the external attributions of Miss Fanshawe, M. de Bassompierre, and Dr. John Bretton (370). She sets up their perceptions of her to highlight the contrast of what she now finds are M. Paul’s rather unique opinions:

Such are your own and your friends’ impressions; and behold! there starts up a little man, differing diametrically from all these, roundly charging you with being too airy and cheery—too volatile and versatile—too flowery and coloury. This harsh little man—this pitiless censor—gathers up all your poor scattered sins of vanity...and calls you to account for the lot.... You are well habituated to be passed by as a shadow in Life’s sunshine: it is a new thing to see one testily lifting his hand to screen his eyes, because you tease him with an obtrusive ray. (371)

Lucy is bothered that M. Paul’s view of herself differs so dramatically from that of the introverted personage she has so carefully constructed. The adjectives she ascribes to M. Paul’s opinion of her—airy, cheery, volatile, versatile, etc.—instead describe a passionate, outgoing, pleasure-seeking individual, someone who displays the characteristics she disdains in others. Lucy is also unaccustomed to having her character so acutely analyzed; aside from Ginevra’s earlier scrutiny of her personality, Lucy emphasizes her status as predominantly an *analyzer* through frequent self-descriptions of being a “looker-on” engaging in close character studies of her peers. This role inversion at once discomfits and arouses Lucy, as is demonstrated through the mixture of severe language (a “harsh little man” “roundly charg[es]” her with “scattered sins

of vanity”) juxtaposed with the tranquil and flirtatious metaphor of being the sun’s bright ray “teas[ing]” M. Paul with her light. Here M. Paul is presented as the one person who “gets” Lucy, something readers must weigh heavily in their constructions of Lucy’s cognitive narrative.

M. Paul’s unique discernment of Lucy’s psychology leads him to test her boundaries on multiple occasions. How Lucy responds mentally and physically to those tests, that is, her actions and subsequent reactions to those actions, illuminates her extroverted qualities where her self-descriptions alone cover them up. Palmer connects the concept of situated identity with the question of action, rightly insisting that, “In a sense we are not so much what we say we are, but what we do. Action is public and so is a fairly reliable, though not infallible, basis on which other individuals can judge the workings of our minds” (168-9). One representative scene that demonstrates how M. Paul pushes Lucy out of her comfort zone into a realm that reveals more about her true inclinations occurs at Madame Beck’s *fête*, when he requests that she play a part in the vaudeville. He says, ““Play you must. I will not have you shrink, or frown, or make the prude. I read your skull, that night you came; I see your *moyens*: play you can; play you must”” (147). Referencing the first night they met, M. Paul insists that Lucy shed her English prudery and “straitlaced” attitude to instead embrace her “*moyens*,” or her abilities (147). In response, Lucy expresses (or feigns) shock: “I gasped, horror-struck. *What* did the little man mean?” (147). Then, after castigating the man with a number of insults that I argue were intended to distract the reader from what follows, she almost immediately decides to hear him out. Once he has listed his reasons, “[a] thousand objections rushed into [her] mind. The foreign language, the limited time, the public display.... Inclination recoiled, Ability faltered, Self-respect...trembled” (148). She expresses numerous reasons for declining, yes, but she accepts remarkably quickly for one who supposedly abhors public spectacle. Lucy had a similar reaction when Madame Beck asked her

to teach—she said, “with my usual base habit of cowardice, I shrank into my sloth like a snail into its shell, and alleged incapacity and impracticability as a pretext to escape action”—and yet her resolution to go through with it anyways suggests to me a suppressed affinity for the stage that nineteenth-century English standards taught her is akin to prostitution (84).

Lucy’s dramatic performance at Madame’s *fête* supports this theory by the sheer confidence and agency she adopts when all eyes are on her. After a moment of insecurity during her “first speech,” she overcomes the initial stage fright, and her “voice took its true pitch, and found its natural tone” (154). Lucy’s word choices, “true” and “natural,” admit to a certain comfort and sincerity experienced while on stage that contradict the persona she has elsewhere presented. Lucy fully embodies her role and even “recklessly alter[s] [its] spirit” (155). In exerting agency over the foppish character she was supposedly terrified of playing, Lucy undermines her insistent narrational interjections that work to convince her readers that she loathes theatricality. She reveals those interruptions to be mere projections to hide a personality trait that delights in rather than refrains from theatrical expression. Lucy admits as much but immediately tells her reader that she has resolved to suppress the notion permanently:

Cold, reluctant, apprehensive, I had accepted a part to please another: ere long, warming, becoming interested, taking courage, I acted to please myself. Yet the next day, when I thought it over, I quite disapproved of these amateur performances; and...I took a firm resolution, never to be drawn into a similar affair. A keen relish for dramatic expression had revealed itself as part of my nature; to cherish and exercise this new-found faculty might gift me with a world of delight, but it would not do for a mere looker-on at life: the strength and

longing must be put by; and I put them by, and fastened them in with the lock of a resolution which neither Time nor Temptation has since picked. (156)

Here, readers see Lucy grapple with the magnetism of the stage and the allure of possibly even being a talented actress (having discovered a “new-found” faculty). However, she insists that such inclinations are inconsistent with her existence as “a mere looker-on at life.” The personality that she has cultivated in herself and in her self-presentation ultimately forces her to overturn any opposing characteristics, regardless of how it affects her potential for happiness.

However, Lucy’s pledge to abstain from theatricality does not persist. As Katie Peel highlights in “Performativity in Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette*,” when Lucy attends a performance starring Vashti, based on the real-life Rachel Felix, whom Cooper notes was “renowned for impassioned performances,” she is entranced by the agency and strength of the “stage empress” (Brontë 579n6, 286). Lucy says, “It was a marvelous sight: a mighty revelation. It was a spectacle low, horrible, immoral,” observations through which Lucy betrays her enthrallment with the exaggerated expressivity inherent in classical tragedies and the captivating stage presence of this actress (286). That Lucy disagrees with Dr. John’s demeaning opinion of Vashti (“he judged her as a woman, not an artist”) further demonstrates her intrinsic sympathies for dramatic natures (289). This scene supports the theory that Lucy possesses more performative affinities than she is likely to admit. She is, after all, *performing* her introversion for the audience of both her fellow characters and her readers. Aware of gender expectations for women to exhibit reticence, but not too much reticence, however, Lucy repeatedly covers up these dramatic urges through her rhetorical control and practiced demeanor of reserve.

A second action of Lucy’s that, albeit in a different manner, reveals a proclivity toward dramatization is her earlier visit to the Catholic priest, Père Silas, for confession. Tension

between the Catholic and Protestant religions pervade the novel in more ways than the scope of this investigation can accommodate, but the dissonance in their attitudes towards presentation and performance subtly mirrors the personality dichotomy of introversion v. extroversion. On one hand, Catholic tradition prides itself on what some characterize as ostentatious display; even confession is a performative act. Protestant customs, however, disdain Catholic showiness in preference of less demonstrative practices. Lucy's staunch Protestantism plays an essential role in the construction of her introverted façade. In discussing her shared view of Lucy's "enacted interiority" and "prudishness as a persona," Julia Kent confirms this notion: "Lucy's admiration for theatricality pervades the novel, although she works to control it by subordinating it to forms of Protestant inwardness" (334, 335). When Lucy visits Père Silas, she not only confesses her betrayal of her religious beliefs, but she also confesses to her readers that she is "not wholly impervious" to the kind priest's "softness" (Brontë 180). A shocking revelation—a Protestant admitting softness for Catholicism?!—Lucy did not need to reveal this fallibility in her character to her readers unless she wished to open up a new perspective on her identity. She does not let the event speak for itself, however. Her narration quickly assures readers of the absurdity of what she just did: "Did I, do you suppose, reader, contemplate venturing again within that worthy priest's reach? As soon should I have thought of walking into a Babylonish furnace" (180). This mocking critique only thinly veils her sacrilegious moment of weakness. The emphatic reasoning addressed to her readers for the purpose of seeking pardon for her offense carries less weight than her physical actions, as the latter is indisputable while the former can easily be manipulated.

Villette's conclusion brings the novel full circle in its open-ended nature that directs attention away from the protagonist. To the end, Lucy persists in upholding her introverted façade despite ample evidence of passionate extroversion throughout the novel. Lucy says, "Here

pause: pause at once. There is enough said. Trouble no quiet, kind heart; leave sunny imaginations hope. Let it be theirs to conceive the delight of joy born again fresh out of great terror, the rapture of rescue from peril, the wondrous reprieve from dread, the fruition of return. Let them picture union and a happy succeeding life” (546). Her subdued words hide herself, her emotions and knowledge of the future, almost as much as she earlier hid her personal history, leaving readers feeling somber and dissatisfied with the novel’s conclusion. Lucy (and Brontë) has left room for a happy ending, which entails, in the minds of her readers, the “return” of M. Paul and his “union and happy succeeding life” married to Lucy, but no reader being honest with him or herself can ignore the fact that Brontë preferred a tragic conclusion for her hero and heroine.⁵ In allowing readers to create their own endings, in “let[ting] them picture” their desired finale, Brontë implies that a pleasing conclusion, while easier to swallow, is simply not the *right* conclusion. Leaving M. Paul’s fate and her own origins unexplained ties the pair together while distancing them from readers. In this penultimate paragraph, Lucy reverts to her suppression of emotion as both a private coping mechanism for the implied grief of M. Paul’s drowning and as a way of downplaying the dramatic nature of bringing any story to a close. Lucy ultimately sacrifices the authenticity of her storytelling in favor of creating for her readers a false impression of reticence and modesty.

Lucy’s final words cut readers off entirely from any sense of intimacy they have previously developed. She says, “Madame Beck prospered all the days of her life; so did Père Silas; Madame Walravens fulfilled her ninetieth year before she died. Farewell” (546). Her

⁵ In correspondence with her publisher, George Smith, Brontë wryly writes regarding “the momentous point – M. Paul’s fate,” that “it was designed that every reader should settle the catastrophe for himself, according to the quality of his disposition, the tender or remorseful impulse of his nature. Drowning and Matrimony are the fearful alternatives. The Merciful... will of course choose the former and milder doom—drown him to put him out of pain. The cruel-hearted will on the contrary pitilessly impale him on the second horn of the dilemma—marrying him without ruth or compunction to that—person—that—that—individual—‘Lucy Snowe’” (qtd. in Cooper’s footnote, Brontë 603n9). Her evident sarcasm here further ironizes her ending, sardonically explicating her justification for *her* desired conclusion over that which appears more desirable to her readers.

narrational style undergoes a stark change from that of contemplative, elaborate prose to abrupt, dry, terse sentences. The absence of emotion suggests to readers that Lucy's life after the novel was one of tedium and further loneliness. This passage also comes full circle to the beginning of the novel in that its focus is outside of Lucy, this time on Madame Beck, Père Silas, and the extremely minor character of Madame Walravens. Despite the five hundred plus pages that delve into Lucy's consciousness, her decision to end with an update on these three individuals demonstrates a resistance to letting her readers believe she was in fact the center of her own story. She situates her narrative externally as a means of distracting from the otherwise self-centeredness of the conclusion. Readers are left with no reason to hope that Lucy will shed her façade of introversion and embrace her extroverted proclivities, a fate that is self-protective and socially beneficial for Lucy but a loss for readers who face the interpretive challenge of seeking out her true qualities in the mirage of introverted disguises.

Chapter Two

“The Proudest...Man in the World”: Failed Performance of Extroversion in Jane Austen’s

Pride and Prejudice

Villette’s highly psychological first-person narrator offers a prime opportunity to examine authorial and readerly constructions of a single mind. In giving voice to her own narrative, Lucy Snowe intertwines introspective reflections with keen observations of how others perceive her to craft for her readers a calculated image of her self-identity. Readers may use Alan Palmer’s continuing-consciousness frame to piece together Lucy’s mental events into what Palmer terms a cognitive narrative of Lucy. In third-person narratives, however, the construction of character identities operates rather differently. Readers are no longer invited into the depths of a single mind but are instead exposed to multiple minds to varying degrees of closeness. Parsing character identities in third-person narratives requires piecing together not one character’s mental operations but rather the mental functions of multiple fictional minds. These minds perceive a narrative’s *storyworld*, or “the world of the story—that ‘reality’ in which the events are presumed to take place,” from varying aspects, each of which must be weighed appropriately in the construction of a character’s identity (Abbott 75). Moreover, that these multiple minds often participate in collective cognitive units of variable size and influence complicates the method by which readers assemble individual character psychologies. Narrative theorists approach the phenomenon of communal thought in two key ways: First, proponents of *folk psychology* refer to *theory of mind* to describe “our awareness of the existence of other minds” and “our ability to explain people’s behavior in terms of their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and desires” (Palmer,

Social Minds 20; Zunshine, “Theory of Mind” 195). Lisa Zunshine equates this concept with “mind reading” (195). Second, narrative theorists who employ the research of *cognitive psychologists* explain community thought not as the ability to predict what another mind is thinking but instead as the working together of multiple minds in unified entities. A subset of cognitive psychology, Palmer’s theory of *social minds* contends that much of cognition, in both real life and fiction, occurs publicly as well as privately; Palmer thus divides cognition into *intramental thought* that occurs independently and *intermental thought* that is “joint, group, shared, or collective” (*Social Minds* 4). In the context of nineteenth-century novels, Brontë’s *Villette* presents a single intramental mind furiously at work. On the other hand, a third-person novel like Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* presents overlapping and intertwining intermental networks of community cognition. This unique ability of a third-person narrator to communicate the inner thoughts of multiple minds both individually and collectively therefore necessitates an ancillary application of Palmer’s theory of intermental group thought atop his continuing-consciousness framework as a means of constructing character identities.

Pride and Prejudice is an ideal novel through which to investigate the cognitive phenomenon of intermental thought in that its limited omniscient narrator wields rhetorical capabilities extending to a collection of minds that often think in group units. With its collective cast and emphasis on rumor and gossip, *Pride and Prejudice* explores the acts of reading and misreading minds as well as the working together of communities of minds often to prejudicial ends. From its very title, the novel draws attention to the inherent fallibility of mindreading and cases when intermental thought, particularly society-level groupthink, runs amok: “pride” and “prejudice” are two psychological weaknesses that frequently cause errors in interpretation and lead to the creation of stereotypes. Austen’s novel thus explores the degrees to which characters

succeed at reading each other's minds, creating pleasurable possibilities for readers to engage in reading and misreading characters' minds as they are led and misled by the narrative's various cooperative intermental units. Essential to the relative success of these mental interactions, however, is the nature of each individual character's mind. As such, an examination of introverted and extroverted character types illuminates the influence of nineteenth-century standards regarding public presentation on mindreading and intermental thought processes. Fundamentally, in keeping with one of Austen's historically specific cultural norms, a mind that is private and introspective is less transparent and thus perceived to be less trustworthy than an open, public mind. Mr. Darcy and Jane Bennett are two cases in point; both characters are misread and mistrusted as a result of their quiet natures. Darcy's failure to conform to widely held expectations favoring extroversion in men and Jane's disinclination to display her emotions diminish their functionality in society, resulting in their being intermentally condemned as unlikeable and unmarriageable, respectively. By exploring how various pairs or groups of minds interact, readers can better understand how this misreading occurs, why introverts are more susceptible to misinterpretation, and how to avoid participating in injudicious intermental units.

Before conducting close analyses of *Pride and Prejudice*'s key scenes of misreading introverts, it is useful to identify the essential differentiating characteristics between introverts and extroverts that show why introverts are patently more difficult to "read" than extroverts. Carl Jung's twentieth-century work, *Psychological Types*, illuminates some of these distinguishing features and provides a working vocabulary that can be applied to studies of minds in nineteenth-century novels. Jung presents extroverts as being more concerned with "external objective conditions" than with internal subjective ones; the extrovert's "entire consciousness looks outwards to the world," thereby leaving his or her mind plainly legible to the public (417). On

the other hand, introverts are “almost inaccessible to external judgment. Because they...have in consequence a somewhat meagre capacity or willingness for expression,...[s]ince their main activity is directed within, nothing is outwardly visible but reserve, secretiveness, lack of sympathy, or uncertainty” (511). An introvert’s propensity for introspection or intramental thought, coupled with his proclivity for privacy, complicates and even threatens the mindreading process, prompting misunderstandings that may amplify into mistrust. Extroverts, on the other hand, are typically more demonstrative in their behaviors and therefore experience less suspicion of secrecy or apathy in their natures. Palmer and Maggie Lane confirm this “prevailing cultural preference...in which secrecy is disliked,” both citing *Emma*’s title character, *Persuasion*’s Anne Elliot, and *Pride and Prejudice*’s Elizabeth Bennett as heroines who deplore secrecy and reservation (Palmer, *Social Minds* 146; Lane 35).¹ Lane goes a step further to argue that Austen herself praises “[o]penness, or open-heartedness” while regarding “reserve...with suspicion,” but this supposition of authorial preference falls apart when the initial misreadings of introverts in *Pride and Prejudice* are rectified and those reserved characters receive happy endings, as will be discussed later (35). Austen’s personal stance aside, careful examinations of Mr. Darcy and Jane Bennett nevertheless draw attention to nineteenth-century social biases against introverts.

To begin, I first argue that Mr. Darcy is one of literature’s classic introverts. Condemned from the start by the Meryton townspeople (and first-time readers) for refusing to socialize with strangers, Darcy struggles throughout the novel to display conviviality false to his genuinely shy,

¹ Emma Woodhouse finds Jane Fairfax “so cold, so cautious! There was no getting at her real opinion....She was disgustingly, she was suspiciously reserved” (Austen, *Emma* 204). Anne Elliot observes of Mr. Elliot that he “was rational, discreet, polished, but he was not open....This, to Anne, was a decided imperfection...She prized the frank, the open-hearted, the eager character beyond all others” (Austen, *Persuasion* 18). And Elizabeth Bennett, among others, condemns Mr. Darcy for being “haughty, reserved, and fastidious” (Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* 48). That all three of these Austenian heroines express a distaste for reservation, associating shyness with having something to hide and openness with sincerity and trustworthiness, suggests that Austen, too, may have held these biases. For more discussion, see Chapter 3, “Openness and Reserve,” in Lane’s *Understanding Austen* and Chapter 5, “*Persuasion* and Other Novels,” in Palmer’s *Social Minds*.

reserved nature. He acknowledges this aspect of his personality when Elizabeth chides him for not taking more dance partners at the ball in which he is introduced: Darcy says, “I am ill qualified to recommend myself to strangers....I certainly have not the talent which some people possess...of conversing easily with those I have never seen before. I cannot catch their tone of conversation, or appear interested in their concerns, as I often see done” (*Pride and Prejudice* 215-6). Aware of his social ineptitude, Darcy confesses his personal incapacity for mindreading and intrinsic aversion to participating in basic intermental cognition with strangers. Darcy essentially proclaims himself, in unfamiliar social situations, to be *mindblind*,² or “unaware of the existence of mental things...like thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, desires, and intentions” (Baron-Cohen 1). Of course, not all introverts are rendered mindblind in social contexts, but that Darcy finds engaging in small talk both disagreeable and intellectually taxing indicates in his psychology an extreme form of introversion under certain circumstances. Despite Elizabeth’s refusal to accept Darcy’s excuse for his antisocial behavior, Darcy’s self-characterization as an introvert invites readers to seek out confirmatory clues elsewhere in the novel.

Elizabeth and Darcy fundamentally disagree with regards to what Darcy’s admittance of social incompetence reveals about his character. Darcy maintains that his social inhibitions are innate and unchangeable while Elizabeth, in comparing the task of conversing to that of playing the piano, purports that both sociability and musicality are learnable skills. She says, “My fingers...do not move over this instrument in the masterly manner in which I see so many women’s do....But then I have always supposed it to be my own fault—because I would not take the trouble of practicing. It is not that I do not believe *my* fingers as capable as any other woman’s of superior execution” (216). Elizabeth hints that Darcy’s social awkwardness is a

² This term is often used to describe autistic individuals, and while I would never go so far as to diagnose Mr. Darcy with autism, I do believe that he is confessing to experiencing similar symptoms when in the company of individuals with whom he is not previously acquainted.

weakness, that sociability must be practiced and honed, especially for men. By comparing the skill of affability to a skill women in particular were expected to master regardless of their personal taste for music, Elizabeth also hints that Darcy's weakness is enabled by his privilege as a man. She ultimately suggests that failing to overcome shyness is shirking a social obligation. In her mind, Darcy has *chosen* not to overcome his timidity and therefore *must* be proud. Elizabeth characteristically uses reason to justify her participation in the group thought of her time and place. She prides herself on being an independent thinker regardless of how others will perceive her (how dare she walk through mud to visit her ill sister rather than wait for a carriage!), yet she more often than not propagates the stereotypical prejudices held by her community. Suggesting that Darcy ought to defeat his shyness both confirms the town's general disapprobation of his behavior and corroborates the nineteenth-century preference for extroversion in men.

This 'general disapprobation' of Darcy's behavior signifies the novel's predominant *large intermental unit*,³ which substantially influences how individual characters think about and perceive their surroundings. Austen begins constructing this large intermental unit in the novel's famous first line, "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (29). That any single "truth" may be "universally acknowledged" implies the existence of a large intermental unit, here including all of English society, thinking collectively. Austen further develops the mind of this large intermental unit during the ball scene in which Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley are first introduced. Darcy is initially distinguished from the others of his party: though Mr. Bingley was "good looking and

³ Palmer puts forth a typological framework that distinguishes five levels of intermental thought: 1. Intermental encounters at the level of the conversation, requiring minimal mindreading abilities; 2. Small intermental units at the level of intimate pairs or small groups that engage in seamless mindreading and cooperative thought, ex. a marriage; 3. Medium-sized intermental units, ex. colleagues or a neighborhood; 4. Large intermental units at the level of a community that has a collective opinion or consensus view on a particular topic (as depicted in the townspeople of Meryton); and 5. Intermental minds of any number of individuals that operate as a unit so successfully that they are considered one mind. For a more detailed explanation of Palmer's typology, see *Social Minds*, Chapter 2.

gentlemanlike,” Mr. Bingley’s sisters “fine women,” and Mr. Bingley’s brother-in-law “merely...the gentleman,” Mr. Darcy

soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien; and the report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a year. The gentlemen pronounced him to be a fine figure of a man, the ladies declared he was much handsomer than Mr. Bingley, and he was looked at with great admiration for about half the evening. (39)

At this point in a first read of the novel, readers, too, adopt this perception of Darcy as a grand personage, impressive to the fellows and desirable to the ladies, for they have no other evidence upon which to form an independent opinion. Austen purposefully withholds Darcy’s true nature until later in the novel in order to cast her readers as participants in the town’s large intermental unit, or what Patricia Meyer Spacks describes as a “local ‘universe,’” one that “relies heavily on rumor” (39n10). Austen tricks her readers into forming the same first impressions based on the same biases held by characters in the novel. Furthermore, in taking advantage of the traditional ball setting to poke fun at small-town dynamics, Austen exposes the shallow, assumptive nature of Meryton’s group character, a liability readers should be wary of becoming culpable to.

Darcy’s glowing first impression lasts only “for about half the evening” and is summarily refuted when his “manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity; for he was discovered to be proud, to be above his company, and above being pleased” (39). In the course of a single sentence, the community’s intermental bias shifts from a positive to a negative view of Darcy, but for what reasons? First, his presentation differs notably from that of Mr. Bingley, whom all agree comports himself like a true gentleman. While Bingley swiftly and easily “made

himself acquainted with all the principal people in the room,” “was lively and unreserved,” and “danced every dance,” thereby gaining the endorsement of all present, Mr. Darcy “danced only once with Mrs. Hurst and once with Miss Bingley, declined being introduced to any other lady, and spent the rest of the evening in walking about the room, speaking occasionally to one of his own party” (39-40). The women at the ball interpret Darcy’s rigidity as failing to fulfill his gentlemanly duty of sociability. Darcy is thus unanimously condemned: “His character was decided. He was the proudest most disagreeable man in the world, and every body hoped that he would never come there again” (40). The use of passive voice—*his character was decided*—in this statement leaves the action of the sentence in the hands of no one in particular and therefore everyone all together. This syntactical decision unites readers and the Meryton townspeople into one all-encompassing intermental unit and suggests that the narrator, too, corroborates the change in evaluation. The overwhelming rhetorical consensus prompts first-time readers to arrive at the same conclusion that Darcy is a haughty, uncivil snob.

This first impression of Darcy’s character fails to do justice to his authentic disposition. First-time readers are initially as blind to Darcy’s introversion as are the residents of Meryton, but there are earlier instances than the one already quoted in which Darcy professes introverted aspects of his personality that excuse some, not all, of his misunderstood behaviors. The first instance occurs in Darcy’s response to Mr. Bingley’s urging him to dance: Darcy asserts, “I certainly shall not. You know how I detest it, unless I am particularly acquainted with my partner....Your sisters are engaged, and there is not another woman in the room, whom it would not be a punishment to me to stand up with” (40). Darcy blatantly insults every woman at the ball he does not know, but I argue that his contempt derives from an intense discomfort with the social environment. Darcy’s ensuing comment describing Elizabeth as “tolerable; but not

handsome enough to tempt *me*” is less defensible, particularly because the comment was made with Elizabeth in earshot (41). Spacks proposes that this provocation is an early form of flirtation from Darcy to Elizabeth, but in order for Elizabeth to be able to perceive it as such, the two would need to be operating as a far more intimate intermental pair than is conceivable at this stage of their acquaintance (41n26). Darcy is likely not even aware of flirtatious intentions. Elizabeth is therefore unable to read in Darcy’s ensuing statement—that he is “in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men”—admittance of his shy nature (41-2). Darcy’s use of the term “humour,” in reference not to his general temperament but to his present mood, suggests to readers that the *circumstances* rather than Darcy’s *nature* disposed him towards his criticism of Elizabeth’s “tolerability.” Darcy’s arrogance in this scene serves as a defense mechanism against his social discomfiture, but that Elizabeth misconstrues (albeit understandably) his statements as indicative of a flaw in his character illustrates a subtle failure of mindreading that is not righted until much later in the novel.

Elizabeth appears to have gained a better understanding of Darcy’s psychology and the two engage in more effective intermental cognition at a later party in which Darcy tries to amend for his earlier snub by inviting Elizabeth to dance. Elizabeth takes advantage of this opportunity to instruct (or, to further Spacks’ supposition, flirt with) Darcy about the rules for proper communication with a dance partner. After a period of silence, Elizabeth “suddenly fanc[ies] that it would be the greater punishment to her partner to oblige him to talk” (131). In recognizing that “oblig[ing]” Darcy to talk would pain and discomfit him, Elizabeth demonstrates a new awareness of (though not sympathy for) Darcy’s introverted qualities. Elizabeth teases him by making “some slight observation on the dance,” to which Darcy “replied, and was again silent” (131). Elizabeth urges him, “It is *your* turn to say something now, Mr. Darcy.—I talked about the

dance, and *you* ought to make some sort of remark on the size of the room, or the number of couples” (131). Purposing to make him uncomfortable, Elizabeth continues to mock Darcy’s lack of social skills by ironically comparing him to herself: “I have always seen a great similarity in the turn of our minds.—We are each of an unsocial, taciturn disposition, unwilling to speak, unless we expect to say something that will amaze the whole room” (131). Elizabeth intends for Darcy to see through her expert sarcasm; she wants him to think alongside her and recognize that the “similarity” between their minds she describes in fact highlights the key difference between Darcy’s introversion and her own frank nature. Elizabeth invites Darcy to read her mind as a way of testing his own self-awareness. Darcy succeeds in parsing her true meaning and gives voice to an interpretation of Elizabeth’s remark that indicates some amenability that is belied by the intermental judgment held against him: ““This is no very striking resemblance of your own character...How near it may be to *mine*, I cannot pretend to say.—*You* think it a faithful portrait undoubtedly”” (131). This exchange demonstrates the gradual breaking down of boundaries that permits the two characters to move one step closer to seamless intermental cognition.

In examining Darcy’s identity, it is important to remember that the intermental unit of the town, including Elizabeth, is not the only unit with which Darcy interacts. Because his social context so considerably alters his behavior, readers piecing together Darcy’s cognitive narrative must acknowledge not only how Elizabeth and the townspeople initially judge him but also how Darcy is perceived by others in the novel with whom he is better acquainted. Palmer’s concept of *situated identity*, which confirms that “identity is distributed among the minds of others,” aids readers in piecing Darcy’s different personas into a cohesive understanding of his whole character (*Fictional Minds* 168). Only after combining Darcy’s *embedded narrative*, “the whole of [his] various perceptual and conceptual viewpoints,” which readers are limited in their

exposure to, with all of the novel's *doubly embedded narratives*, or aspectual understandings of his mind "as contained within another character's mind," are readers able to grasp his 'true nature' (*Fictional Minds* 15, 231). When he is first judged in the context of the ball, the Meryton townspeople construct a doubly embedded narrative of Darcy as an arrogant, self-important man. This is but one of Darcy's several doubly embedded narratives within the novel. For instance, Mr. Bingley, who knows him well, never questions Darcy's fundamental character and follows his advice without hesitation. Wickham, on the other hand, manipulatively paints a dark, almost criminal picture of Darcy because of their dubious history. These coexisting opposite readings of the same character validate the importance of not merely accepting one aspect as the truth. Readers must be willing to adjust their interpretations of Darcy's character as they are exposed to different perceptions of him in order to avoid falling into the same prejudicial trap as Elizabeth.

Readers must be aware of others' readings of Darcy in part because the novel offers few opportunities to see directly into his psychology, or his self-aspect. The third-person narration of *Pride and Prejudice* restricts readers' access to Darcy's mind to his dialogue (which is inevitably shaped by his social context) and his letter writing. One of these rare opportunities for readers to enter Darcy's inner self-evaluations occurs in his centrally located letter to Elizabeth following his rejected marriage proposal. However, it is then Elizabeth's process of reading and rereading the letter that uncovers the interpretive significance of being invited into Darcy's mind. When Elizabeth first sits to read the letter, "with a strong prejudice against every thing [Darcy] might say," she desires "to discredit it entirely" (245, 246). She predisposes herself to disbelieve all of the letter's contents. However, Darcy's reports of his relationship with Wickham and his warnings to Mr. Bingley regarding Jane unsettle her, and she re-peruses the epistle "with the closest attention" (246). Darcy's honest self-account of his behaviors and actions has a profound

impact on Elizabeth's (and readers') perception of his character. That this self-account comes in the form of a letter in a way lends credence to its genuineness; Darcy's shyness renders him poor at representing himself in face-to-face confrontations and so expressing himself through writing enables him to "present" himself with composure. Through Elizabeth's rereading, she at last recognizes the multifariousness of interpretation and the subjective influence of "countenance, voice, and manner" on the formation of first impressions (247). The letter removes these three elements from the equation and facilitates a more objective evaluation of Darcy's words alone. From this point on, Elizabeth and readers become more trusting of Darcy as a character and more eager to comprehend his mysterious cognitive narrative.

Elizabeth's experience while reading and rereading this letter has the added impact of inducing her to revise her reading of herself. Spacks points out that the "situation of being forced to alter previously held views is unusual for [Elizabeth]: she tends to state her opinions forthrightly and to believe in them absolutely" (247n10). Relinquishing a prior conviction is a key event in Elizabeth's character arc that enables her to critique her own flaws and prejudices as she examines others'. In reevaluating Darcy, she also reconsiders her opinion of Wickham, whom she now realizes she has tactlessly misread, though for markedly different reasons than those for which she misread Darcy. She sees that she based her favorable opinion of the soldier on his physical attractiveness, "the general approbation of the neighborhood, and the regard which his social powers had gained him" (247). The intermental unit of the neighborhood and Wickham's superior social skills skewed Elizabeth's initial appraisal of him. Wickham's extroverted personality painted a picture in her mind as "her model of the amiable and pleasing," while Darcy's introverted personality prevented her from seeing past his serene, austere presentation (192). After reading Darcy's letter, Elizabeth finally grows aware that she is not

impervious to the pressures of community thought, no matter how independent she may be or how much she purports to rely on reason. She, too, falls prey to forming false judgments based on nineteenth-century standards regarding introversion and extroversion. The effect of her close rereading of Darcy's letter and, as a result, his character is, ironically, an in depth rereading of herself: "Till this moment, I never knew myself," she says (249). Herein lies the introspective payoff of reading and rereading. Felicia Bonaparte points out that Elizabeth's arriving at the skill of being able to read "the world as well as the word" constitutes the novel's "*bildung*" in developing Elizabeth's "philosophic" powers of "practical empiricism" (261, 265). Elizabeth's ability to discern Darcy's honesty from her preexisting biases facilitates her psychological growth just as readers' abilities to reread Darcy enable them to achieve a more sophisticated understanding of his role in the novel as an introvert misunderstood by a flawed society.

Elizabeth's rereading of Darcy's letter does not yet fully convince her of Darcy's purity of mind. Darcy's character continues to be situated differently in the minds of different characters, thereby provoking the same contentious question presented in the exploration of Lucy Snowe: how do readers determine which reading is the "right" reading of Darcy as he exists within the novel's storyworld? Austen's focalization through Elizabeth's psychology encourages readers to follow her incrementally changing views of Mr. Darcy, but the wary reader should recognize that Elizabeth's judgment is not always sound. In order to arrive at an answer to the above question, I again suggest that readers must acutely examine the aspect that is closest to the character in question (in familiarity, mutual trust, and/or physicality) or the aspect in which the character is most at ease to "be himself," if you will. In addition to the self-aspect represented in his letter, the closest perspective from which to evaluate Darcy's character is from his home in Derbyshire. During a visit to the Pemberley estate with the Gardiners, Elizabeth is surprised

when Darcy's housekeeper asserts, "He is the best landlord, and the best master...that ever lived....Some people call him proud; but I am sure I never saw any thing of it. To my fancy, it is only because he does not rattle away like other young men" (289). Initially bent on disbelieving the housekeeper, Elizabeth gradually realizes that her recommendation of Mr. Darcy "was of no trifling nature. What praise is more valuable than the praise of an intelligent servant?" (290).

To Elizabeth's further surprise, Darcy himself arrives just as she is preparing to leave. In Darcy's conduct Elizabeth observes an "[a]maz[ing]...alteration of his manner" since their last encounter in which Darcy, "with a look of haughty composure," handed her the above discussed letter (292, 235). She observes that he is not in "perfect composure" but is "of perfect civility" (292). Spacks notes, "the words *civil* and *civility* occur eleven times in this chapter, always with reference to Darcy....Here this language has no connotation of empty forms; it describes a profound change in Darcy's manners" (292n37). This emphasis on Darcy's seemingly newfound civility within the context of his home highlights the role of circumstance, time, and place in determining Darcy's behavior. Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner's first impressions of Mr. Darcy differ tremendously from those which Darcy's demeanor prompted in Meryton. Mr. Gardiner says, "'He is perfectly well behaved, polite, and unassuming,'" and Mrs. Gardiner admits, "'There *is* something a little stately in him to be sure...but it is confined to his air, and is not unbecoming. I can now say with the housekeeper, that though some people may call him proud, *I* have seen nothing of it'" (299). These drastically different first impressions are accounted for by the change in setting in which Darcy is introduced to his new acquaintances. In the unfamiliar context of the country ball, Darcy's social discomfort induced him to present an inaccurate persona, but in the familiar aspect of his home, he is at ease to present a truer picture of the gentleman he really is.

Mr. Darcy is not without his faults, however. His inability to read the minds of strangers extends to Miss Jane Bennett, whose emotions Darcy grossly miscalculates as a result of her introverted disposition. Jane's introversion differs from Darcy's, though. Rather than being discomfited in and averse to social situations, Jane is simply quiet, reserved, and polite, overall possessive of the qualities expected of a young woman in the nineteenth century. Yet, these generally desirable features diminish her in Mr. Darcy's mind as a suitable match for Mr. Bingley. In his letter to Elizabeth, Darcy describes the effect of an "evening's scrutiny" of Jane: "Her look and manners were open, cheerful, and engaging as ever, but without any symptom of peculiar regard...the serenity of your sister's countenance and air was such, as might have given the most acute observer, a conviction that, however amiable her temper, her heart was not likely to be easily touched" (238). Darcy paints the picture of a model woman who succeeds in balancing conviviality with reticence, engages in conversation without excessive emotional display, and conceals her romantic attractions. Jane very properly obeys the common instruction of conduct books to never "let your eager attention and visible preference betray the flutter of your heart" when talking with a gentleman, yet Darcy misconstrues her propriety for impartiality (Gregory 34). Darcy's mistake in interpretation (like Elizabeth's misreading) demonstrates the severe limitation of relying on visual cues alone in the attempt of reading another's mind. This second occurrence of misidentifying an introvert's thoughts and motivations again illustrates the challenge of reading minds whose mental operations incline inwards and also the inescapability of nineteenth-century preferences for extroversion, even in the mind of an introvert.

Despite these central misreadings of fictional minds in the novel, Darcy and Jane in the end marry their beloveds and enter into the intimate spousal relationships that constitute the strongest intermental pairs. A happy marriage is one in which both partners think as one, perhaps

not always agreeing, but nevertheless able to read the other's mind without the verbal aid of conversation; Austen leaves no room to doubt the happiness of Darcy's and Jane's marriages. When Elizabeth asks Darcy what originally sparked his attraction to her, Darcy plainly states, "For the liveliness of your mind" (*Pride and Prejudice* 422). Elizabeth's *mind*, not her beauty or actions, captivated Darcy; his desire to communicate with her intermentally, to understand and interact with her internal cognition, made him seek her companionship. To the hopelessly romantic reader (a decent portion of Austen's audience, I would imagine), this establishes the foundation of a truly equal, united partnership. Elizabeth, characteristically candid, says,

You may as well call it impertinence at once.... The fact is, that you were sick of civility, of deference, of officious attention. You were disgusted with the women who were always speaking, and looking, and thinking for your approbation alone. I roused, and interested you, because I was so unlike them. Had you not been really amiable, you would have hated me for it; but in spite of the pains you took to disguise yourself, your feelings were always noble and just; and in your heart, you thoroughly despised the persons who so assiduously courted you. There—I have saved you the trouble of accounting for it; and really, all things considered, I begin to think it perfectly reasonable. To be sure, you knew no actual good of me—but nobody thinks of that when they fall in love. (422)

Elizabeth retroactively comprehends Darcy's mind, verbally expressing what she intuitively are (and were) his thoughts and feelings. Readers do not witness as much of Jane and Mr. Bingley's intermental cognition, but it is clear that the couple's happiness rests on their thinking differently together than they might individually: the newlyweds "remained at Netherfield only a twelvemonth. So near a vicinity to [Jane's] mother and Meryton relations was not desirable even

to *his* easy temper, or *her* affectionate heart” (427). Alone, it is less likely that either partner would have been inclined to move away from Meryton, but now that their minds are one, Jane’s “affectionate heart” and Mr. Bingley’s “easy temper” privilege a different mode of thought. Austen ties together these marriage plots not only to give readers their desired happy ending but also to demonstrate the powerful nature of intermental cognition between happy couples.

These classically happy endings granted to Mr. Darcy and Jane also betray, in my mind, Austen’s compassion for those characters who are misread as a result of their introverted natures. This reading of her classic text is not intended to suggest that Austen favors introverts over extroverts; rather, it shows Austen vying through her writing for the rectification of misinterpretations that occur on the bases of pride and various societal prejudices. That introverts are more frequently misread for reasons outside of their control is simply a coincidence. I maintain that Austen sympathizes with those who are inadvertently misread and scorns those who purposefully mislead. Darcy and Jane both receive their desired marital conclusions while Wickham is forced into a matrimonial situation he had hoped to evade. Furthermore, this novel about mindreading and intermental cognition aptly illustrates the fallibility of first impressions and the importance of being willing to revise those impressions. In bringing Mr. Darcy, Jane, and Wickham to justice, and in enabling characters and readers to rectify their mistaken judgments, Austen displays her commitments to truth, open-mindedness, and trust. *Pride and Prejudice* thus privileges the careful working together of different kinds of minds through reason and understanding to achieve meaningful relationships more so than it stands to perpetuate societal values regarding performance and reticence.

Coda

Resigned to Introversion: Philip Wakem in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*

Lucy Snowe of *Villette* and Mr. Darcy and Jane Bennett of *Pride and Prejudice* fit neatly into this discussion of how characters perform or fail to perform nineteenth-century expectations regarding introversion and extroversion, performance and reticence. In the above investigations of how these three characters behave in private compared with their public interactions, I have relied on elements of cognitive narrative theory to demonstrate the ways in which a character's willingness to comply with standards of propriety and sociability impacts the reading of his or her mind by fellow characters and readers. First, Lucy Snowe presents an example of a woman who carefully manipulates her public persona so as to participate normatively and self-protectively in her social environment. I have argued that Lucy is inherently an extrovert, driven by an intense need for social approbation and torn by a suppressed proclivity for dramatization. She disguises these innate characteristics, however, under a façade of introversion. I maintain that Lucy exploits her authority as a first-person narrator to construct this introverted façade for her fictional peers and her readers both as a coping mechanism for her fears of intimacy and loss and as a way of conforming to nineteenth-century British ideals for women. Furthermore, I contend that Lucy the character is significantly more passive and voyeuristic than Lucy the narrator, who actively engineers her rhetoric to deceive, a discrepancy that points to Lucy's endeavors to conceal extroverted elements of her personality and to muffle passionate desires that conflict with her constructed image of operating through reason and control. In addition to sifting through Lucy's rhetorical maneuvers, readers must also interpret how other characters

read Lucy's façade and then determine which aspects of her situated identity are most trustworthy. In combining these elements of Lucy's narrative, readers quickly find that the cognitive narrative they construct for her in many ways conflicts with the narrative she tells. A reader attuned to Lucy's personal and social motives, however, is able to recognize that her conscious efforts to present as an introvert ultimately strive to disguise her extroverted nature.

Unlike *Villette*, *Pride and Prejudice* employs a third-person narrator, which removes the element of embodied rhetorical performance from the equation. The characters in Austen's novel I have explored are two born *introverts* who *fail* to perform nineteenth-century standards of decorum: Mr. Darcy and Jane Bennett neglect to exhibit the sociability and openness expected of them and, as a result, are misinterpreted in ways that threaten their abilities to function in society. Because of his discomfort in large social events and his aversion to conversing (much less, dancing) with strangers, Mr. Darcy makes a poor first impression on the community of Meryton. He is read as proud and egotistical, thus obstructing Elizabeth's ability to perceive him as a potential mate even once he has actively pursued her. Jane, too, is misread on the basis of her introversion, ironically so by Darcy himself. Rather than sympathizing with Jane's reticence or recognizing that women of the time were expected to refrain from overt admissions of romantic desire, Darcy reads Jane's reserve as not reciprocating Mr. Bingley's attraction. Readers later learn that Darcy's primary flaw is not pride (though he is proud) but rather social awkwardness and that Jane is merely reserved. Nevertheless, both characters' dispositions initially hinder their abilities to participate in their respective marriage plots. Jane and Darcy do ultimately enjoy the traditional endings of an Austen novel, demonstrating Austen's covert sympathies for misread introverts amidst the underlying social prejudice against them as a result of their minds being less transparent and more challenging to read than extroverts'.

What ultimately enables Lucy Snowe to maintain her introverted façade and Mr. Darcy and Jane Bennett to have their happy endings is that each character seemingly has control over his or her outward presentation; despite various innate proclivities and intrinsic personality traits, Lucy, Darcy, and Jane are all able to overcome their natural propensities and function in their strictly regulated societies. They each succeed in tempering their extreme characteristics to suit the expected moderation between introversion and extroversion. This ability to control one's self-presentation, however, is a gift often taken for granted. That the characters thus far discussed have the privilege of molding their images problematizes the reading of characters whose outside circumstances limit their abilities to erect a public façade or display nuanced personality traits. Lucy, Darcy, and Jane are all *able* to present their native dispositions, though one chooses to disguise herself while the others simply need closer acquaintance to be understood. So, how should a reader interpret a character whose innate personality is not allowed to flourish but is rather restricted by external factors? To what extent can a reader (or fellow characters) judge the actions and behaviors of characters whose circumstances force them to adapt to potentially undesired lifestyles and prevent them from developing the relationships that might enable them to alter those circumstances? And how should readers negotiate their sympathies for characters that don't have that underestimated agency to manipulate how others perceive them? While Lucy Snowe, Mr. Darcy, and Jane Bennett adeptly illustrate the powers of performance in social engagement, Philip Wakem of George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) is instead denied performative agency and therefore offers a rich opportunity for cognitive analysis of nineteenth-century novelistic depictions of introversion and extroversion. Examining how Philip's identity is situated within the various mental aspects of his community, how large and small intermental units operate within the novel in ways that influence readerly impressions of Philip, and how

Philip's body language communicates his mental actions will enable readers, through Alan Palmer's continuing-consciousness frame, to illuminate much about Philip's cognitive narrative.

Perhaps even more emotionally troubled than the rebellious Maggie, Philip Wakem is from the beginning set apart from society as a result of his physical disfigurement. Introduced as "the deformed lad" one hundred pages before he is named, Philip is subliminally objectified in readers' minds long before they are given the opportunity to judge him for his character (78). Mr. and Mrs. Tulliver are discussing with various aunts and uncles the issue of sending Tom to apprentice under a clergyman because the wealthy Mr. Wakem is doing so with his son. "'But Lawyer Wakem's son's got a hump-back,'" Mrs. Pullet objects; "'it's more nat'ral to send *him* to a clergyman'" (78). Mr. Glegg agrees; Philip's disability makes him unfit for the business world. Similarly to how Mr. Darcy is initially judged against Mr. Bingley in *Pride and Prejudice*, Philip is placed in direct opposition to his more socially normative counterpart, Tom. Tom is viewed as the ideal young man just as Mr. Bingley represents the model gentleman, while Philip is the pitiable cripple and Mr. Darcy an arrogant snob. Readers witness a large intermental unit¹ at work against Philip, but it is important to note that this prejudice operates far differently from that which operates on Mr. Darcy. Darcy is judged on the basis of his behavior, while Philip is judged because of his physicality. The former can be manipulated; the latter is permanent. Herein lies a challenge of interpreting Philip alongside characters like Mr. Darcy, Jane Bennett, and Lucy Snowe: even this early scene in which Philip is absent shows readers Philip's limited agency in determining his own destiny—it is only "nat'ral" for him to study with a clergyman. Thus, the disproportionate weight of external factors acting on Philip's psychology places an additional burden on the reader who is attempting to piece together his cognitive narrative.

¹ See Chapter Two for explanation of large intermental units.

Brief though the above exchange is, it nevertheless merits further consideration with regard to how it situates Philip on the introversion – extroversion scale. The dialogue about Tom’s future as it relates to Philip’s delineates clear dichotomies between the physically fit and physically deformed, businessman and clergyman, and, in turn, extrovert and introvert. I suggest that each of these dichotomies is interwoven with the others: broadly speaking, the physically fit are better equipped to be successful in business by virtue of being more socially active and thus appealing to prospective clients, while (as insinuated by Mr. Glegg) the physically deformed are better suited for the clergy in that its quiet, bookish lifestyle opposes gregariousness and suits the introverted personality type. In this sense, it appears that the collective mind of the town has relegated Philip, on account of his hunched back, to the life of a clergyman and an introvert. Whether Philip corroborates this “choice” of occupation is yet to be determined. At this stage of a first read of the novel, readers have no reason to assume that this unnamed son will play a significant role in Maggie’s central narrative and, as such, need not question the ethics of the town’s opinion. Not until readers grow more invested in Philip’s outcome do they begin to challenge the overarching view that Philip’s physical limitations consequently limit him intellectually, socially, and emotionally, as well.

When readers actually meet Philip, the reputed image of a disabled hermit is at first confirmed. “The deformed lad” is finally given a name when he is presented as Tom’s new schoolfellow. Tom’s reaction is predictable given his participation in the intermental unit of his community: “Tom felt in an uncomfortable flutter as he took off his woollen comforter and other wrappings. He had seen Philip Wakem at St. Ogg’s, but had always turned his eyes away from him as quickly as possible. He would have disliked having a deformed boy for his companion, even if Philip had not been the son of a bad man” (181). The Tulliver family has economic

reasons to be at odds with the Wakems, but the details of Tom's physical discomfort (being in a "flutter") and his aversion to looking at Philip place more emphasis on Philip's physicality than on the discord with his father. Philip is aware of Tom's embarrassment and anxiety, for "everyone, almost, disliked looking at him, and his deformity was more conspicuous when he walked" (182). The picture of Philip as a grotesque figure is challenged, though, when Tom observes that his face "was really not a disagreeable face" (182). In addition to noticing a gentle maturity in Philip's look, Tom finds himself admiring Philip's "enviable manner" of holding his pencil as he draws, an observation that defies Philip's otherwise physical inelegance (183). This humanizing quality both impresses Tom and arouses sympathy for Philip that cues readers to question their own participation in the large intermental unit of the town. The consequence of this seeming opposition in Philip's character (being at once awkward and graceful) triggers readers to enter Palmer's continuing-consciousness frame² in which they begin to piece clues together to construct a fuller understanding of Philip's cognitive narrative.

That *The Mill on the Floss* is written in the third person, like *Pride and Prejudice*, and that it primarily focalizes through Maggie both limit the depth with which readers can access Philip's consciousness. As such, readers have two main avenues for constructing Philip's cognitive narrative: first, much of what readers learn about Philip's thoughts and his perspective on the world comes from dialogue with others, most often Maggie. As Maggie grows to be his one close confidante, Philip openly shares his literary interests, life philosophies, and romantic feelings. Secondly, readers augment their understandings of Philip's consciousness through close readings of his body language. Philip's physicality is central to his character, as is evidenced by the consistent objectification of his deformity in defining his identity. Lisa Zunshine uses the term *embodied transparency* to describe "the moments in fictional narratives when characters'

² See Chapter One for details about Palmer's continuing-consciousness frame.

body language involuntarily betrays their feelings, particularly if they want to conceal them from others” (23). She then identifies three “rules” for embodied transparency in prose fiction: contrast, between a character’s transparencies at two points in time or between two different characters’ relative transparencies; transience, the brevity of the transparency; and restraint, the character’s efforts to conceal feelings and mask body language (see 30). To illustrate, when Philip is depicted as being adroit with a pencil, his body language is contrasted with Tom’s (and readers’) expectations of his physicality. The moment is transient in that the chapter ends with Tom’s determination to reassert his superiority by alluding to Philip’s “unfitness for active sports” in his suggestion that Philip “‘*could* fish...It’s only standing and sitting still, you know’” (186-7). And, Philip’s “winc[ing]” reaction and “almost peevish” response demonstrate restraint in not wanting to betray to Tom his hurt feelings (187). Conducting this kind of close analysis of Philip’s body language and dialogue throughout the novel would facilitate the construction of a continuing-consciousness frame for Philip, particularly in cases where his reclusive behaviors, hunched posture, and introspective speeches highlight introverted characteristics.

One exemplary area in which Philip’s body language particularly hurts him is in the way his disfigurement limits his ability to participate in stereotypically male activities. Frequent feminization of Philip’s character further separates him from society. Upon first meeting Philip, Tom silently pities how “the brown hair round [his face] waved and curled at the ends like a girl’s,” and he later hurtfully yells, “‘You know I won’t hit you because you’re no better than a girl’” (182, 196). When Maggie, caught up in the moment, expresses to Philip that she “‘should like never to part’” and wants “‘to make [his] life very happy,’” she then “stoop[s] to kiss the pale face that was full of pleading, timid love—like a woman’s” (382). Philip himself acknowledges, “‘there are many other things I long for...things that other men have and that will

always be denied me” (342). Such emasculation both removes Philip from heteronormative relations and resigns him to the private sphere of the home. That he is viewed as inferior to other men affects Philip emotionally. Instilled with resentment, Philip resorts to solitary, introverted hobbies that cultivate his intellect rather than his sociability. The narrator defends Philip’s effeminate nature, however, asking of readers, “Do not think too hardly of Philip....Kept aloof from all practical life as Philip had been, and by nature half feminine in sensitiveness, he had some of the woman’s intolerant repulsion toward worldliness and the deliberate pursuit of sensual enjoyment” (375). In other words, Philip’s femininity is not his own fault; his upbringing and disability forced him to remain isolated in the home, where he adopted an introspective life of domestic pastimes. The androgyny within Philip’s identity both compromises his capacity for romance and highlights the analogous ambiguity between introversion and extroversion. Philip’s inability to meet expectations for males physically, socially, and emotionally ultimately centers on his parallel inability to perform extroverted behaviors.

At this point, it would perhaps be overly forgiving to suggest that Philip’s separation from society and resignation into introversion are *entirely* out of his control. It is conceivable that Philip’s deformity, among other factors, initiated his seclusion, but the resultant feelings of isolation likely then triggered behaviors of resentment that perpetuated his solitude. Barbara Guth articulates the blend of external and internal elements acting on Philip’s isolation:

If Maggie finds little comfort and support in the society around her, Philip finds less. His father’s relative wealth, frequently gained at the expense of his neighbors, cuts him off from many possible companions. In addition to his deformity, his interests in music, art, and literature separate Philip from people such as Tom who value only practical achievements. Philip’s wide exposure to

culture brings him close to contempt for the people around him. His self-consciousness makes him see slights where none is intended and avoid contact that might be embarrassing to himself or others. His “half feminine”...sensitivity makes him withdraw from the fellowship and friendship that he desires. Philip’s protest takes the form of seclusion. (359)

Guth presents only two reasons for Philip’s isolation that are out of his control: his father’s wealth and his deformity. Otherwise, she seems to believe that much of Philip’s tragic story falls in his own hands, that his choice of interests and emotional reactions contribute to his “protest,” a term that grants Philip significant agency over his isolation. I question these claims. Guth suggests that Philip does not “value...practical achievements” as Tom does, but isn’t it more likely that Philip’s disability from a young age prevented him from being physically able to pursue standard “male” interests? If so, did his perceived inability to fulfill male expectations from his youth oblige him to seek out alternative amusements? His insecurities spring from being repeatedly and openly repelled by others, not from choice, so should readers interpret his self-seclusion as a protest, or does his reclusiveness function instead as a defense mechanism? Parsing the circumstantial from the dispositional elements of Philip’s personality enables readers to separate their understandings of *the life Philip leads* from *who Philip is* as a character, two facets of this misunderstood boy’s narrative that often conflict with one another.

Maggie is the one character from whom readers are truly able to garner a sense of *who Philip is*. Not only does she elicit Philip’s feelings and philosophies through their conversations in the Red Deeps, but also readers learn about Philip by appreciating the essence of what makes their relationship special. In the scene in which Maggie first interacts with Philip, she is unafraid to look at his disfigurement. Instead,

she could not help looking with growing interest at the new schoolfellow, although he was the son of that wicked Lawyer Wakem who made her father so angry....Tom some weeks ago had sent her word that Philip knew no end of stories—not stupid stories like hers, and she was convinced now from her own observation that he must be very clever; she hoped he would think *her* rather clever too when she came to talk to him. Maggie, moreover, had rather a tenderness for deformed things; she preferred the wry-necked lambs because it seemed to her that the lambs which were quite strong and well made wouldn't mind so much about being petted, and she was especially fond of petting objects that would think it very delightful to be petted by her. (201)

Imbued with Maggie's persistent need to be loved and appreciated, this passage displays a tenderness and curiosity towards Philip unique from the typical reaction others have upon seeing him. I believe Maggie sees something of a kindred spirit in Philip, who is denied love on the basis of simply being what—not who—he is. Maggie says to Tom, “I think Philip Wakem seems a nice boy....He couldn't choose his father, you know,” demonstrating her awareness that Philip's reputation is founded on factors outside his control (201). Philip senses Maggie's curiosity when he catches her “pair of questioning dark eyes fixed upon him,” but he is not made uncomfortable by her stare as he might be should she be anyone else (202). Rather, he “thought this sister of Tulliver's seemed a nice little thing, quite unlike her brother; he wished he had a little sister. What was it, he wondered, that made Maggie's dark eyes remind him of the stories about princesses being turned into animals? I think it was that her eyes were full of unsatisfied intelligence and unsatisfied, beseeching affection” (202). The “I” here is the narrator interjecting into Philip's thoughts, insinuating but not telling that Philip senses Maggie's thirst for knowledge

and need to be loved. The keen mindreading depicted in this moment illustrates key sensitivities in both characters' personalities and suggests that Philip, too, sees a kindred spirit in Maggie.

As Maggie and Philip's relationship matures, they open up to each other and converse about literature and philosophy. Tensions arise, however, when Maggie begins reading and following the teachings of Thomas à Kempis, a fifteenth-century Christian mystic who insisted upon renunciation being the key to "inward peace" and freedom from suffering (Eliot 327). In à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*, Maggie feels that she has found "a secret of life that would enable her to renounce all other secrets" (328). She later asks of Philip, "Is it not right to resign ourselves entirely, whatever may be denied us? I have found great peace in that for the last two or three years, even joy in subduing my own will" (371). Philip "vehemently" disagrees, telling Maggie, "you are shutting yourself up in a narrow, self-delusive fanaticism, which is only a way of escaping pain by starving into dulness all the highest powers of your nature. Joy and peace are not resignation; resignation is the willing endurance of a pain that is not allayed, that you don't expect to be allayed" (371). He pleads with Maggie, "*Listen* to me, *let* me supply you with books, do let me see you sometimes, be your brother and teacher....It is less wrong that you should see me than that you should be committing this long suicide" (373). As Guth confirms, Philip's life of suffering has enabled him to persevere through pain as a way of confirming that he is "wholly alive," and he thus views Maggie's renunciation as "an escape from responsibility" and "an excuse for hopelessness" (361, 360). That Philip endures the affliction of his isolation demonstrates his adaptability as a character; though his introverted lifestyle has been thrust upon him, he nevertheless chooses to seek fulfillment rather than yield to heartache. For both self-interested and self-sacrificing reasons, he urges Maggie to do the same.

In her exploration of the physio-psychology of habit in *The Mill on the Floss*, Kristie Allen supplies an apt vocabulary for discussing Philip's conviction. Allen distinguishes two different Victorian ideas regarding habit: first, habit as "passive unconscious reflex," and second, habit as "self-actuating reflective behavior" (832). She explains that "Victorian physiologists believed that habits were established through the 'exercise' of the brain" and that habits could be "flexible dispositions capable of being retrained through conscious effort" (832). In other words, habits are both unconsciously instinctual and consciously changeable. In *The Mill on the Floss*, readers see Maggie determine to change her unconsciously developed depressive psychological habits through her application of Thomas à Kempis's attitudes towards renunciation and self-denial. Maggie transforms her mental and emotional inclinations from having, in her words, "the bad habit of being unhappy" with the seeming meaninglessness of life, into a lasting philosophy of asceticism (Eliot 421). Her transformation confirms the Victorian belief that habits, paradoxically, are malleable. Philip resists the idea that habits can be determined and instead purports that "no one has strength given to do what is unnatural. It is mere cowardice to seek safety in negations" (373). His insistence on the durability of disposition suggests that once the novel is over, he will continue to endure the life that has been given him. Despite the lack of choice he has had regarding his occupation and social mobility, Philip *has* chosen to mold his disposition into an optimistic fortitude that enables him to cope with pain. As evidenced in his final letter to Maggie, he will continue to subsist on his love for her, the one thing that "sufficed to withhold [him] from suicide" (573). In this sense, Philip's principle that Maggie should not change her "passionate and imaginative nature" is—not hypocritical—but moderately inconsistent, as he himself has engineered his personality to suit his situation in life (311).

Philip's is the last physical presence in the novel. He and Stephen Guest both visit Maggie and Tom's tomb to pay respects to "their keenest joy and keenest sorrow," Stephen first, accompanied by Lucy's "sweet face," and Philip second (596). Philip "was always solitary. His great companionship was among the trees of the Red Deeps, where the buried joy seemed still to hover like a revisiting spirit" (596). Philip survives to live the life of sadness and solitude he has always lived. Once again, for reasons outside his control, Philip is denied happiness. Yet, despite Eliot's agonizingly sorrowful ending, readers can be confident Philip will endure. Both Guth and Allen suggest that the novel's conclusion confirms Philip's convictions, thus conveying Eliot's own perspective on the philosophy of renunciation. Guth concludes her essay, "Clearly, in killing Maggie Tulliver George Eliot mourned the loss of some real and valuable part of herself. Philip speaks for the part that found its refuge and survived" (362). Allen, after contrasting Maggie's and Philip's views on habit, asks, "Does the fact that Philip predicts correctly suggest that George Eliot's own view corresponds most closely with his?" (841). Readers can only speculate as to the answer to this question, but my instinct is to agree with Allen's implication. The intensity of the sympathy Eliot generates for Philip and the anguish readers feel upon his surviving his beloved surely points to a connectedness between Eliot and her misshapen creation, a theory that is bolstered by Maggie's "tenderness for deformed things" (Eliot 201). In developing this thesis further, I hope to confirm these conjectures with textual evidence to support the view that Philip's perspective on the immutability of disposition is also Eliot's.

The present analysis of Philip's character has introduced but some of the many intricacies of Philip's psychology that merit consideration within the dichotomous context of introversion and extroversion. The earlier investigations of key characters in *Villette* and *Pride and Prejudice* illustrated how class- and gender-based standards for performance and reticence, as defined in

conduct books of the time, impacted perceptions of those whose natural dispositions made fitting into the expected mold difficult. Lucy Snowe's active rhetorical and behavioral performance of introversion represents one woman's efforts to display cultural preferences of reservation and self-control despite internal proclivities towards passionate self-expression and dramatization; Jane Bennett's and Mr. Darcy's shortcomings in exhibiting sociably extroverted behaviors delayed their abilities to enter their desired matrimonial engagements. Philip Wakem's character complicates this discussion of how introverts and extroverts are perceived on the basis of nineteenth-century class and gender expectations in that his temperament is perhaps not inherent, but rather acquired as a result of his disfigurement and his father's contentious role in society. As such, using Palmer's continuing-consciousness frame to construct Philip's cognitive narrative is made more complex by adding the element of Philip's lack of performative agency to the equation. The complexity of Philip's psychology is worth the effort of parsing out, not only because scholarship as of yet has largely neglected this intricate character, but also because of what he illuminates about society's treatment of those who differ from the norm, whether or not they do so by their own choosing.

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